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*History of Mahomet*

**MAHOMET METHODIST CHURCH  
CENTENNIAL  
1955**



**ISABELLE S. PURNELL**



1855      CENTENNIAL YEAR      1955

# THE METHODIST CHURCH

MAHOMET, ILLINOIS



Pastor—Rev. Selden L. Myers

District Superintendent—Rev. Leland L. Lawrence, D.D.

Bishop—Charles Wesley Brashares, S.T.B., D.D., LL.D.

## FOREWORD

This history of the Mahomet Methodist Church is being published in conjunction with the Centennial Celebration, 1855-1955.

Much research has been done in records and books of history which have included the secretary's records of various organizations, treasurer's books, legal abstracts, atlases, as well as newspapers, scrap books, and other sources. Older citizens of the town and former residents have been very helpful in checking letters, diaries, etc.

In the beginning, the committee planned to write only a history of the Methodist Church, but as more and more time was spent rereading all of the materials, the relationship of the church to the community and its organizations became more evident. Life in rural communities is so closely knit that it seemed impossible to write the story of the church without including the history of the town, its organizations, institutions, and their development.

Space does not permit us to give credit to the many persons who have assisted with this book, but we do appreciate the help of all who have made this publication possible. Special recognition goes to Mrs. Louise Purnell Jones who has served as proofreader. Those who assisted with the advertising section were Mesdames Florence Weatherford, Besse Miller, Melvin Miller, Ernest Turner, Harold Sloan, and Maurice Abraham.

Mention is made within the pages of this book of all the current business and professional people in Mahomet who have contributed financially to the publication of this book. For their help we wish to give them this special recognition.

Isabelle S. Purnell, Editor

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## HISTORY OF THE MAHOMET METHODIST CHURCH 1855-1955

THE old records of the Mahomet Methodist Church were destroyed when the parsonage burned in 1916 so all early history is drawn from newspaper clippings, letters, and recollections from the older members and former residents of Mahomet.

We find in one of the early histories of the county (1866) this paragraph: "On the west of Champaign lay Middletown, which was an old town and was early visited by Methodist ministers [in those days called circuit riders]. Middletown was connected most of the time with some western circuit; and it is most probable that it was Bloomington or Waynesville. In later years it was connected with Monticello and Mount Pleasant [now Farmer City]."

It is known that the Methodists of Middletown (now Mahomet) had organized a class at an early date, probably in the 1830's, and were occasionally visited by the circuit riders of that period. From 1843 to 1855 Middletown belonged to the Monticello circuit. In 1855, the Middletown circuit was organized, and embraced all of the Sangamon settlements in the county. The Middletown circuit originally extended from Fisher to Center-ville. A house of worship was completed in 1856.

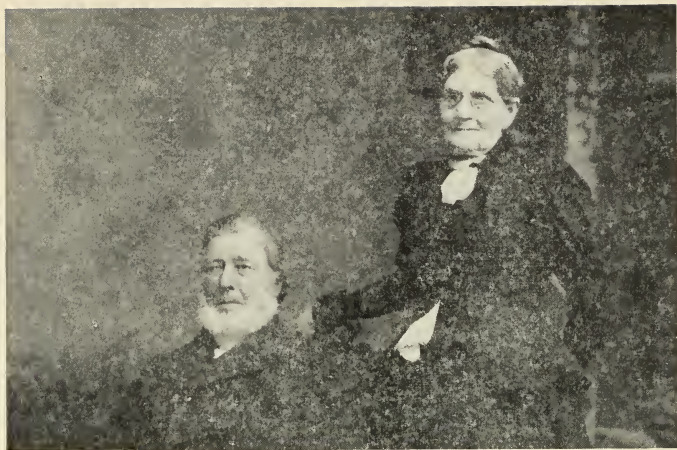
In his memoirs written in 1906 Robert Fisher recorded: "In 1848, we moved on a farm father bought, one and one-half miles east of Mahomet, Champaign County, Illinois, into a three-room house where he commenced having meetings as there was no schoolhouse or church to hold meetings in. He continued about three years before a place could be had in town. Father helped organize the Mahomet Circuit in 1852, and then started a subscription for the Mahomet Church which was the first Methodist one built on the Sangamon River above Monticello."

The first mention of "Methodists" in this vicinity is made in the autobiography of Peter Cartwright, "The Backwoods Preacher," who relates that in the 1830's he made a trip from his home in Pleasant Plains, near Springfield, Illinois, to the headwaters of the Sangamon, holding meetings in the homes of the settlers. One of the pioneers, "Aunt Jane" Davis, told that Peter Cartwright came to Middletown, and that she attended a meeting held in the home of her sister, Mrs. Dr. Smither. (This is believed to be about two miles north of the high school on what is now known as the Henry Wilson Farm.)

Mrs. Nellie May Kilgore writes information taken from the notes in the old family Bible owned and carried by Uncle John Kilgore and still in her possession—"When the first Methodist Church was organized in Mahomet, there were but a few families in this community, and the services had been held in the cabin of John C. Kilgore, who frequently acted as the minister and led the singing. One hundred years ago, Thomas Davidson Wiley Davis, Sr., and John C. Kilgore organized and built the first church, along with several other early settlers. The lumber came from a saw mill located about one-half mile west of the Riverside Cemetery on the old Kilgore farm."

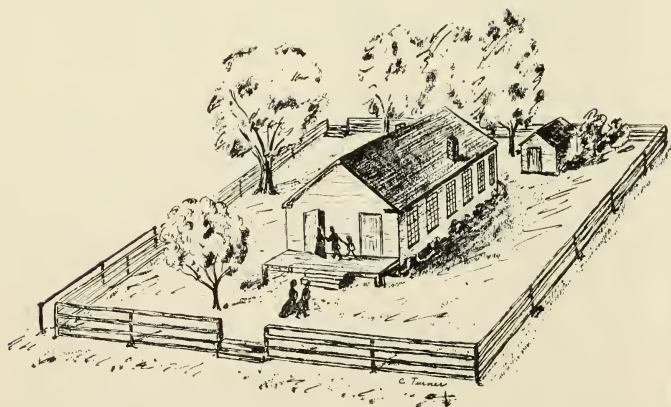
The First Methodist Church was built in Middletown in 1855, and stood originally on Lots 38 and 39 of the C. C. Hawes Addition, now the site of the Mrs. W. G. Babb residence.

This church rested upon ten large boulders, all of which have been removed except one which was at the northwest corner of the church building and can be seen there today. Two boulders were removed several



**Aunt Jane and Uncle Wiley Davis**

years ago to what was known as the Ford property. These, through the courtesy of Guy Warner and Elbert Morrison, have recently been moved to the church lawn and have been made into a lawn seat. Also, some of the bricks from the chimney in the original house and stones from the farm where Peter Cartwright conducted the first services have been set up as a memorial on the church lawn. Two other boulders were moved to the Paul Jones property. When they were removing the boulders, Mr. "Andy" Hyatt noticed something shiny under the one large boulder which had served as the corner stone. The tin box which had housed the papers and valuables had decomposed, but one coin was shining—a three-cent piece dated 1853 which no doubt was the year that construction was begun. (Mrs. Bessie Hyatt has this coin in her possession today.)



Sketched by Carolita Kroner Turner

The church building faced south. It had no tower, spire, bell, or vestibule. The building was between sixty and seventy feet in length, perhaps twenty-five or thirty feet wide, and had two front doors, one on each side, the reason being that in those days women occupied one side of the church, and men the other. The seats were straight and uncomfortable with a railing in the center. There were shorter seats on either side of the side aisles.



**Three-Cent Piece**

Heat was supplied by two large wood stoves, one on either side. Those were the days of wood-cutting and hanging kerosene lamps. As one entered the church, there was a large library against the wall between the two doors. A platform extended across the front of the church.

Following are excerpts from a newspaper clipping taken from Estelle Ford's scrap book, now in the possession of Isabelle Purnell:

### **Reunion of Middletown Circuit September 7, 1882**

The first annual reunion of the pastors of the Middletown circuit of the M. E. Church was held at the Big Springs (now Art Busch's pasture) last Thursday. There were not as many old pioneer preachers present as was expected, but those who could not attend sent their regrets, with many kind words and blessings. There was at least one thousand persons present, and a glorious time was had by the old gray-haired church members as they talked and cried over their early struggles in trying to establish what is today one of the most influential circuits of the M. E. Conference.

Rev. M. D. Hawes of Bloomington, Rev. Benjamin Bartholow of Cisco, Rev. Calhoun of Farmer City, and Rev. J. W. Lee of Mahomet made short addresses. It was decided to hold an annual reunion September of each year.

The following is a brief history of the old Middletown circuit and will be of interest to many who live in the four adjoining counties and though given in mere outline will be filled up by the older readers of this paper with remarkable incidents and christian experiences.

The Middletown circuit was organized in the year 1855 from the old Monticello circuit, which formerly embraced what now forms a large part of Champaign and Bloomington Districts. Those instrumental in securing the organization of the Middletown circuit were James W. Fisher, B. F. Harris, John C. Kilgore, and Hezekiah Phillippe. It was in the Danville District with Rev. Amos R. Garner as pastor in charge. The first year of separate organization was one of prosperity. The church building and parsonage at Middletown was begun and completed the next year.

In 1856, Rev. C. Y. Hecox was pastor, under whose charge the circuit greatly prospered. This was the year of great revivals throughout the United States, and this circuit shared very largely in the blessed results.

In 1857-58-59, Rev. L. C. Weems, son-in-law of Peter Cartwright, was the presiding elder, and Rev. C. W. Hecox was returned. Bethel Church near the farm residence of B. F. Harris was built in 1857, and the close of 1859 found the circuit prosperous, over one hundred conversions having been recorded.

In 1860, the circuit was transferred to Bloomington and named Mahomet with Rev. William Hindle and Rev. I. T. Miller preachers. This was also a prosperous year. At the next conference the circuit was again placed in the Danville District and took its original name, Middletown; with seven separate appointments with Rev.'s William Hindle and H. S. Tryon in charge. The camp meeting of this year was crowned with blessed results.

In 1862, Rev. S. Shinn was pastor and Rev. F. B. Sale in charge of the work which prospered finely. In 1863, Rev. S. Shinn was returned in charge and Rev. S. C. Abbott, a local preacher, was employed. In 1864, Rev. C. Y. Hecox and S. C. Abbott had charge of the work. The church at Pancake's Point was begun this year and was dedicated the next by Rev. G. Moody and named "Shiloh."

In 1865, the Champaign District was formed with Rev. R. W. Travis, presiding elder; and Rev.'s C. Y. Hecox and H. S. Tryon had charge of the Middletown Circuit. In 1866 and 1867, the circuit was served by Rev.'s C. P.

Baldwin, N. S. Buckner, and M. S. Curl. The Church at Centerville was commenced in 1866-67 by Rev. R. W. Travis. The church known as Wesley Chapel was finished in '68 at a cost of \$3,000. The year was very prosperous, and many gave their souls to God. After twelve years the old Middletown circuit was again divided. Centerville circuit was organized in 1868, including Centerville, Bethel, Hedges, and Argo.

In 1869-70, Rev. J. T. Orr assisted by F. Pasco and J. B. Martin served the circuit. In 1870, the church at Fisher was built under the endeavors of Rev. J. T. Orr. The year closed with such prosperity that the circuit was again divided, and in 1871 Newcomb Circuit was organized.

Thus, in sixteen years a church property valued at over \$13,000 had been secured on the old Middletown circuit. With a membership of 800 members, scores have been taken to the home above, and influences sent forth which abide to this day.

In the Sucker State appeared an article about another one of these reunions: "In August, 1888, there was held a memorable reunion here in Mahomet. Services were held both morning and afternoon, Rev. H. S. Tryon and Rev. B. F. Sale giving the memorial addresses. The attendance having increased beyond the capacity of the church to hold, and the weather being more favorable, the people proceeded to the Grove after dinner. [The Grove is where the Gladson Burton house now stands.]

"At the conclusion of the reunion, officers appointed for the ensuing year were D. A. Phillippe, president; C. Dyer, secretary; committee of arrangements, F. B. Sale, David Fisher, W. P. Dick, E. C. Bartholow, and John H. Funston.

"The only political speech of the day was delivered by Rev. Horace Reed of Bloomington who (in the words of another) 'cast cold water upon the occasion by making the only political speech.' "

Mr. Lee Dale says, "I left Mahomet in the early 1890's. However, I well remember attending church and Sunday school in the old building located in what was at that time the northeast portion of the town. Mrs. Newell was one of the teachers of the primary class. Miss Jennie Pittman [Jennie Sorenson] was another teacher."

Few people refer to the old Methodist Church without remarking about the sexton, "Uncle John" Morse, father of Mrs. Florence Sackriter, who was sexton for over twenty-three years. Mr. Dale says, "The church had a sexton by the name of John Morse that we kids were scared of. He called us down frequently whenever we became too noisy or whispered too much. We all thought him really hard-boiled, but now I am satisfied he was doing the right thing."

Mr. William Johnson said, "Mrs. Sackriter's father, John Morse, was the janitor of this church as long as I could remember, but when they built the new church he would not go along with them."

Fred Stearns wrote, "There were the two Amen corners—one for the older women [on the east side of the church] and one for the men [on the other side]. The organ faced the preacher, with the organist's back to the audience.

"My mother, Mary A. Stearns, was organist for years; then Tillie Kilgore, with Irene Ford as assistant. Choir members were: bass—Jule Brown, J. C. W. Pittman, Henry Shively, J. L. Stearns, Dan Kilgore, and Andy Phillippe; tenors—Jim Starling and William Neely; sopranos—Mary Stearns, Irene Ford, Estelle Ford, Minnie Scott, and Mamie Pittman; altos—Jennie Pittman, Emma Stearns, and Nellie Kilgore. Later the Women's Amen Corner was replaced with a platform as high as the preacher's platform for the choir, and that is when Charles Dale was introduced as cornetist for the Sunday school and church services and was assisted by George McClure with the alto cornet."



S. J. Purnell told of the first-class fight over putting an organ into the church, for it was believed that a musical instrument was of the devil and did not belong in the church. Then after the organ was finally installed there was another fight as to who would play it.

Bessie Rayburn writes: "In 1884, the church was a plain, straight church and faced the south with a board fence all around it, with maple trees on the north and west and a hitch rack on the west. There was a stile at the northwest corner. Nellie Watson, Mary Kieffer, and I used to play on the stiles and walk the board fence. Brother and Sister West were the minister and wife. Brother Bischoff held a revival, and the church was crowded every night. We used to walk from the old Ham place down to church because it was too muddy to drive."

Mrs. Ida Binkley Grindley tells us that she joined the old Methodist Church in 1888 when she was fourteen years old. "When I was baptized here at the old Methodist Church I was baptized at the ford in the Sangamon River, and it was so low that I had to get down on my knees in order to be baptized. There was no organ in the church when I attended; just singing. The Honn house as it now stands in the grade school yard [old Methodist Church] looks just like it used to, except the old church did not have the porch on it, and the windows on each side were formerly doors. When the old building was moved, it was sawed in two so it is a few feet shorter than when it was originally built. The other part of the house M. E. "Nash" Smith moved to his property. Uncle Dave and Aunt Emily Pittman always went to the old church. Uncle Dave had the blacksmith shop and also repaired wagons. Aunt Emily was a real little lady—as short as a small child and was quite heavy set. She always sat in the northeast corner, up in the Ladies Amen Corner. Uncle Dave had made her a special little stool which she used to get into the seat."

Mrs. Anna Purnell said the baptism road was near the old bridge. Methodists were baptized at the river, the same as were the Baptists. This road runs along the north side of the Geiger house. She recalls seeing "Brother Simmons" performing baptismal services.

Mrs. Purnell remembers a controversy which arose some seventy years ago in the church. Two church members, Uncle Wiley Davis and James Park had a dispute over a land mark and a road opening. Uncle Wiley opposed the petition which was set up by Mr. Park in the laying out of a new road south from the Hume corner (where Wilfred Wood now lives) to the present residence of Leland Dollahon. Uncle Wiley (who lived where Herman Wyatt now lives) wished the road to remain as it was by going on south following the ridge past his residence. Uncle Jim Hume wanted to join the church, but Uncle Wiley objected because they had had this dispute. Uncle Wiley also objected to Jim Park's joining the church so Jim picked up his hat, walked out of the church and never returned.

In the summertime the windows of the church were open and the horses were tied at hitch racks on the east and west sides of the church. The horses would get to fighting so most of the congregation would turn their heads to see if their horses were in on it. The preacher would stop talking until the owner of horses would go out to settle the fight. Quite often Mrs. Stucky would come over from her home (the same place where Mrs. Hyatt now lives) to see that the horses were not abused as she was in sympathy with the horses more than with the owner.

Mrs. Helen Tryon Bowditch writes: "The Methodist Church of Mahomet is very dear to me. I was born in the Methodist parsonage when my father was pastor, and my mother carried me to Sunday school when I was but one month old and laid me in a seat while she taught a Sunday school

class. When my father's pastorate ended there we moved away, but returned to Mahomet when I was nine years old, and I lived there until I was married in 1896.

"It was the old Methodist Church, and I can see it so clearly in my memories, a beautiful lawn with the parsonage in the rear. [This parsonage was later sold to the trustees of the Presbyterian Church and was used as their manse. Later, it was the old James Young home.] It was in this church that I gave my heart to God. 'Twas here that I taught my first Sunday school class and 'twas here I made my first faltering prayers in public. I remember so well my dear Sunday school teacher, Mrs. Clara Hume, and Anna Pippin." (Mrs. Hume and Mrs. Mary B. Caldwell taught for many years. A Sunday school quarterly of Mrs. Hume's is now in the possession of Mrs. Anna Purnell, dated 1890—subscription price six cents per quarter.)



**Hazel Purnell Burns and Clara Hume**

W. E. Johnston tells, "Mrs. Silas 'Grandma' Purnell had white ponies, Vic and Nell, which she always hitched to a phaeton and drove to church. If she rode one pony and not the other one, then the remaining pony would jump the fence and follow. Mrs. Purnell was an untiring worker in the church. They held big church dinners and entertained the presiding elder [the same as the district superintendent of today]. They spread the dinner on boards placed across the tops of the seats. There was no place to heat coffee except to set the coffee pot on top of one of the heating stoves.

"Mahomet used to be heavily wooded. One fellow went to church in the winter time and his team got loose. They searched for his team in the heavy timbers and never found them until the next spring. The team had got caught with their sled and could not get loose and had starved to death and only the carcasses were found in the timber just south of the railroad tracks on the west side of Route 47 [West of Lisle Lester's home].

"Mrs. Tom Scott was a Methodist and taught small boys. Tom Scott was a Baptist and taught in that church. Each was loyal to his own beliefs.

"Johnnie Carter [Mrs. Henrietta Carter's father-in-law] rode horseback to church. Wiley Davis drove a rig; he let the women out, and then hitched to the post which was next to the stile at the northwest corner of the church. He allowed no one else to hitch to his post."



**"Grandma" Purnell and Vic and Nell**

Frank W. Taylor tells of going to the church with his father who innocently tied his horses to the first post—next to the stile at the northwest corner. After church Mr. Taylor could not find his team. Wiley Davis, discovering someone had tied at his customary spot, deliberately moved Mr. Taylor's horses, tying them at some other place. This made the elder Mr. Taylor angry so he never returned to the church.

Fred Stearns writes, "I can remember when I was five or six years old. Mrs. Newell taught us boys and girls in the southeast corner of the church. Peter Kieffer, who lived southeast from the old Ernest Stout place, was a worker in the church. Before he was converted he smoked, drank, gambled, and probably was considered one of the most sinful men of his day. He was converted in Bischoff's revival, and there was probably never a better Christian in Mahomet then than he was. He taught a men's class. One cold Sunday morning he told how the Lord had told him to go to church, and the devil had told him to stay at home, and he said he had come to spite the devil. One preacher, a good one, was West. As I remember, it was during his pastorate when Bischoff was evangelist and ten or twelve boys went forward and on probation, then later they joined the church. I don't know of a one living today but myself. Others were Preston Carter, Vern Brown, Billy Tryon, etc."

W. E. Johnston also tells of Peter Kieffer, "Old Man Kieffer would make Saturday preparations so that when Sunday came he did only what had to be done. Once he went to church with only a half dollar, put it in the collection plate and said, 'The Lord will provide'; after church he met a man on the street who had owed him three or four dollars for sometime and who paid him right then and there."

Hazel Herriott McTaggart writes, "I have heard my mother tell of how devout a Christian Grandpa Kieffer was. He never missed prayer meetings and often he walked because he thought the horses were too tired

to be used after working in the field all day. Mother spoke of the Amen corner in the church. She also spoke of the long prayer and testimonial service that followed the church service each Sunday morning and often held till after one o'clock. I have a walnut jewel box [size 7½ inches by 8 inches by 6½ inches] which my Uncle "Dode" [Theodore] Herriott made from the walnut wood in the old church. I have had the box about thirty years."



**Peter Kieffer Family**

Stephen Abbott, grandfather of Nelle Morrison, gave a silver communion service set to each of the three churches—Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian, perhaps in the 1880's. Instead of having the individual glasses they used the one silver cup and each person drank from it.

According to S. J. Purnell, other members of the old church included Henry Orr, George, Samuel, and Aaron Pittman, Samuel Stern, Jerry Harland, Mr. and Mrs. Willis Hubbard, Mr. and Mrs. John Kilgore and four daughters, Mr. and Mrs. H. E. Cowan and daughter Connie, Mr. and Mrs. Johnnie Waugh, Thomas and Elizabeth Davidson, D. J. and Anna Ford and daughters Estelle and Irene, George Taylor, Thomas Wiggins, John Hume, John Sterling, J. D. Brown, and Mr. and Mrs. William Caldwell.

Mrs. William Rayburn adds Joseph and Celia Pittman, Richard Johnston and family, Julie Ann Scott, James Davidson, Benjamin McGath Family, J. D. Pittman and Mary Abbott, A. E. Smith and family, Thomas Dale, Tenie, Oscar, Charles, and Lee Dale; Betty and Hattie Burcham. To these Charles Dale added James Starling, J. C. Pittman, James H. Lott, Jerome Davidson, Silas Purnell, and Grandma Newell.



Lola Wiles remembers well Rev. A. N. Simmons, minister 1890-92. Their son, about three years old, jumped around so much he shook the seat. Mrs. Simmons vowed she was going to break him of that if she had to take him out and spank him. One Sunday though she did not take him out, she set him down so hard that it resounded all over the church. The father preached right on as if nothing had happened. The boy improved.



**D. J. and Anna Ford and daughters Estelle and Irene**

Here we have a copy of a church program for the years 1894-95 when the church is referred to as the Mahomet Station of the Illinois Conference, M. E. Church. Rev. A. C. Byerly was the presiding elder, and Rev. T. D. Weems was pastor. Preaching was at 11:00 A.M. and 6:30 P.M.; Sunday school 9:30 A. M.; Epworth League 3:00 P. M.; and prayer meeting on Wednesday nights at 6:30 P.M.

Church officers were: J. A. Bellinger, George Frankenberger, W. P. Dick, W. H. Rittenhouse, O. S. Hyde, Wiley Davis, D. J. Ford, J. W. Starling, William Stearns, and W. O. Dale. Class leaders were Peter Kieffer, Richard Johnston, and Nathan Wiles. Trustees were J. A. Bellinger, George Frankenberger, Richard Johnston, John Stearns, Wiley Davis, D. Bailey, William Caldwell, and J. W. Tanner.

Temperance, Mrs. M. E. Scott, Peter Kieffer, and Mattie Shively; education, J. W. Starling, J. H. Hume, and Prof. F. D. Bowditch. Church records, W. H. Rusk and the pastor; parsonage and furniture, Mrs. Jane Davis, Mrs. J. A. Bellinger, Mrs. M. E. Scott; church music, J. C. W. Pittman, J. W. Starling, and Mrs. A. E. Tryon. Organist, Mrs. A. E. Tryon and Claudine Dick, assistant. Ushers were D. H. Hartly and William Tryon; collectors, J. A. Bellinger and Wiley Davis.

(Original in possession of Mrs. Anna Purnell.)

Following is a list of pastors who served the old Mahomet Methodist Church, 1855-1896:

1855 .....	Amos Garner	1873-75 .....	H. S. Tryon
1856 .....	C. Y. Hecox	1876-77 .....	P. G. Carroll
1860 .....	W. Hindall & I. T. Miller	1878 .....	J. W. Sinnock
1861-64 .....	Amos Garner	1879-80 .....	J. Montgomery
1865 .....	C. Y. Hecox	1881 .....	V. C. Randolph
1866 ....	C. P. Baldwin & N. S. Buckner	1882-84 .....	J. M. West
1867 .....	C. P. Baldwin	1885-86 .....	W. Murphy
1868 .....	J. T. Orr & F. Pasco	1887 .....	J. P. Denning
1869 .....	J. T. Orr & J. Martin	1888-89 .....	W. H. Schwartz
1870 ....	M. D. Hawes & T. J. Coultas	1890-92 .....	A. N. Simmons
1871 .....	H. C. Adams	1893 .....	L. A. Powell
1872 .....	G. B. Wolfe	1894-96 .....	T. D. Weems

It would seem that the older folks wanted to stay on in their old church, with the beautiful old trees and the plain simple building, the men sitting on one side and the women on the other. However, the younger generation had a different opinion. They wanted to mix with the boys and girls from other churches. They no longer felt the need of segregation of the men and women within the church. The days for the old church meetings did not have the same appeal for them—the place for that happy religious meeting ground. These young people felt a new church was needed, new and young shade trees. They were ready to lead forth into the future.

"I recall the date," wrote Lee Dale, "when my father deeded to the church the lots upon which the parsonage and church edifice were erected—the present church. It was during the year of 1895."

The deed to the property tells the story. It was a warranty deed, dated May 2, 1895, and filed June 18, 1895.

"Beginning at the Southeast corner of Lot 4, thence Northeast along the west side of Lincoln Street to the Northeast corner of Lot 5, thence West to a point 81 feet north of the Southwest corner of Lot 3, thence south to the north side of Dunbar Street, thence east to beginning, all in Block 4 of Alanson Tucker's Addition to Mahomet, being the south 81 feet of Lot 3, all of Lot 4 and part of Lot 5.

"From Thomas Dale and his wife Maggie Dale to Trustees of M. E. Church, Mahomet, Illinois. Trustees: J. A. Bellinger, Wiley Davis, George Frankenberger, David Bailey, Richard Johnston, William Caldwell, John Stearns, and J. W. Tanner. Witnesses: B. D. Abbott and L. D. Weems. Deed recorded in Deed Record No. 104, Page 165."

This site was very low and in fact for twenty-five years the children of the Village used to skate in the winter time on the pond. This pond was made by the excavating for the clay which in turn was made into brick and used in the construction of the present brick Baptist Church in Mahomet. "Cad" Maxwell told that Isaac Minnear helped haul the brick to build the Baptist Church and that the brick was made on the Irle premises, south of the M. E. Church.

Fred Stearns tells of the laying and dedicating of the corner stone—"The Thomas Dale Lot was settled on for the location. Farmers came in with teams and scoops. Several of us boys came with teams for grading and excavating. Rev. T. D. Weems was the pastor and a fine man for every occasion. The corner stone services were held after the basement was dug, the walls up to where the floor height comes. There was a large audience for the corner stone laying. The trees were quite small at this time. It was

a hot day. Rev. Byerly who gave the address said, 'I must keep my hat on as there is not a hair between me and heaven,' and he did so."

Estelle Ford had a copy of the program for the corner stone laying, with a notation on it that C. N. Clark of Urbana had donated the stone.

Programs of the corner stone laying and the dedication of the church were carefully preserved.

CORNER STONE LAYING, M. E. CHURCH

Mahomet, Illinois                      July 30, 10:30 A. M., 1895

— Programme —

Hymn .....	Choir Coronation
Prayer .....	Rev. Graham
Song .....	Epworth League
Remarks .....	Bro. Hartly
Song .....	Choir
Fraternal Address .....	Rev. Talbot
Song .....	Choir
Fraternal Greeting .....	A. F. & A. M.
Address .....	Rev. A. C. Byerly, P. E.
Collection .....	Same
Placing Box in Corner Stone	
Formal Laying Same	
Benediction	

Wiley Davis, Sr.	}	Committee.
J. A. Bellinger		
J. C. W. Pittman		
		T. D. Weems, Pastor



New Church

## DEDICATION SERVICES

January 5, 1896

Doxology	
Invocation .....	Rev. Mr. Graham
Hymn No. 248 .....	Coronation
Scripture .....	Rev. Mr. Talbott
Hymn No. 871, page 186 .....	Tune St. Thomas
Sermon .....	Dr. Earl Cranston
Financial Statement .....	T. D. Weems
Collection	
Trustees Present the Church	

The twenty people who contributed most for the building of the new church were: J. A. Bellingier, Wiley Davis, J. C. W. Pittman, Ladies Aid, Mary E. Scott, William Stearns, Mr. and Mrs. George Frankenberger, J. M. Dickson, Epworth League, S. A. Fisher, R. G. Rayburn, George McClure, Lizzie Davidson, William Holzer, H. S. Tryon, B. F. Thomas, John Carter, Mary E. Carson, B. F. Harris, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Lott. The original cost of the church was \$6526.

### Ministers of the New Methodist Church

1894-96 .....	T. D. Weems	1916-18 .....	U. Grant Johnston
1897-99 .....	M. A. Hewes	1919-21 .....	E. A. Hedges
1900-01 .....	C. R. Morrison	1922 .....	C. H. Davis
1902 .....	D. W. English	1923 .....	J. F. McAnally
1903-05 .....	T. S. Mitchell	1924-28 .....	B. M. Petty
1906-09 .....	E. L. Darley	1929-30 .....	B. D. Mallinson
1910 .....	T. O. Holley	1931-35 .....	C. D. Robertson
1911-13 .....	C. W. Caseley	1936-38 .....	J. W. Dees
1914 .....	J. E. Strevey	1939-44 .....	H. Ray Funk
1915 .....	J. S. Smith	1945-52 .....	H. K. Gaither
1953- .....	S. L. Myers		

Fred Stearns relates, "The church as it is today had a close call soon after it was finished. It was cold enough for people to wear overcoats. The church was being lighted when our chandelier fell to the floor, breaking the kerosene lamp and setting fire to the building. Gene Crocker happened to be there. He immediately took off his overcoat and smothered the blaze. He was greatly honored by the whole congregation and afterwards was presented with a new coat."

The Estelle Ford scrap book carries an account of the Martha Washington Tea which was held February 22, 1898, with Rev. M. A. Hewes as pastor in charge. The names of 112 persons were registered.

This same book registered those who attended the M. E. Church Fish Fry on April 5, 1898. There were thirty-seven present for the dinner and sixty for the supper. The minister and his wife were given free dinners. The meal was 25c a plate. Receipts for the day were \$24.55 and expenses were: Fish, \$7.45; Sucker State, 57c; telephone, 55c; Miscellaneous, 80c, making the total expenses \$9.37, leaving a net profit for the entire day of \$15.18.

Listed below are some of the articles contributed for the Annual Church Fair held in 1898: Estelle G. Ford, 2 pillows, 2 aprons, 1 medallion; B. F. Thomas, Sr., cord of wood and fifty eleven-foot rails; Mrs. Belle Bryan, wash stand set, doilie, mirror, frame; Mattie Shively, 1 apron, 4 pincushions, toy trunk; Mrs. A. V. Purnell, 1 doll, baby book, 2 bags; Allie Johnston,

1 hat pin holder, 1 pin cushion, 1 pen wiper; Mattie Keene, sunbonnet; Mrs. Thomas Dale, 2 cups and saucers, 3 aprons, handkerchief 83c; Mrs. Wiley Davis, 2 head rests, combing apron and one bag 90c; Mrs. Pet Ruhl, 2 kerchiefs, creamer and sugar bowl; Mrs. Lizzie Wright, 3 aprons, 75c; Nannie Hayward, 5 mats, 50c; Mrs. Robert Wright 50c cash.

The next three passages reproduce newspaper clippings taken from Estelle Ford's scrap book:

### **1899 Epworth League District Convention in Progress at Mahomet**

The good people of Mahomet are sleeping in hammocks and on cots this week, and the patient small boy of that town is waiting for the second dinner table, for Mahomet is entertaining the one hundred fifty to two hundred delegates who have gathered to attend the annual convention of the Epworth Leagues of the Methodist Church in Champaign District. Mahomet is not a large town, but there is not a town in the county whose people can come nearer entertaining the visitors than can Mahomet . . .

The opening session of the convention was held in the handsome new Methodist Church yesterday evening, the building being packed to the doors by delegates and citizens who had turned out to hear the lecture of Bishop C. C. McCabe. Tickets were sold in advance, and many who had not purchased tickets were compelled to return to their homes, being unable to even secure standing room.

Bishop McCabe's address was quite outstanding. Only a year or two before his death, Mr. Charles Purnell quoted McCabe's text and repeated parts of his address, even though Mr. Purnell was only 15 years old at this time.

Fred Stearns has the ribbon banner in his possession from this Convention—"Ninth Annual Epworth League Convention—June 21, 22, 23, 1899." (The Epworth League as an organization was established May 15, 1889 in Cleveland, Ohio.)

### **A Trip Around the World—1901**

Last Saturday evening the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society gave their long looked for entertainment, "A Trip Around the World." The first train started promptly at 5:00 o'clock. It was a little early but for the most part was successful. The later trains had more passengers, some having more than the desired number. The Riverside Park hack and a bob-sled were provided to carry some of the passengers while the rest made the trip on foot, but the ground having frozen by 7:30 o'clock, walking was not unpleasant. Mr. Oscar Dale acted as guide.

The first stopping place was America, at Uncle Wiley Davis' house where we met excellent impersonators of President and Mrs. Roosevelt, George and Martha Washington, General Miles, Uncle Sam, and Columbia. After being presented to each one we were invited to partake of the national dish of Boston baked beans, coffee, and sandwiches. Twenty minutes was the limit, for each party had to make way for the one following. At the end of that time we left and proceeded on our tour to Japan, at D. J. Ford's.

Here we were presented to the Mikado of Japan and the Japanese Nightengale and were served with tea, wafers and crackers by Japanese ladies, in true Japanese fashion on the floor. The house was decorated with Chinese lanterns. We were also shown the handkerchiefs which were so long in coming to this place. They were excellent specimens of hand work. We were here given the names by which we were to be presented at the next stopping place. There were some noted people in our crowd, Pope Leo of Rome, Marrietta Holly, General Lew Wallace, Tri'by and many others. At the end of our time we proceeded to England, at G. L. McClure's where we were presented to the King and Queen of England. As each name was called he was required to bow three times, kiss the Queen's hand, shake the King's hand and back out of the room. Most of the party complied with the request except Pope Leo, who said that the Pope of Rome did not have to bow to anyone.

We were served with scalloped oysters and pickles, and passed on to the next place which was Holland at Mattie Shively's. Here the Queen of Holland and Prince Henry received us and we were served by Holland



lassies, with a Dutch supper consisting of quite a variety of foods after which we passed on to Iceland, for ice cream and cake and we were left to get home the best we could. After all had made the trip the celebrities were taken around and all returned to the depot to visit with each other.

In America, W. H. Holzer impersonated President Roosevelt; D. J. Ford, George Washington; Mrs. Robert Wright, Martha Washington; C. R. Morrison, General Miles; C. A. Pricer, Uncle Sam; Sarah Hale (now Sarah Jahr), Columbia. At Japan, H. A. Davis, the Mikado; Mrs. H. A. Davis, the Japanese Nightengale. At England, T. H. Rea, King; Mrs. G. L. McClure, Queen. At Holland, Lillie Lott, Queen Wilhemina; Elbert Morrison, Prince Henry.

The ladies are to be congratulated upon the success of the affair, both socially and financially, having cleared almost fifty dollars. About two hundred made the trip.

### Harvest Home Supper—September 15, 1900

This harvest home supper, at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Bellinger, two miles east of town, Thursday evening, was one of the most novel and pleasant social events ever held in the township. Preparations had been going on for some time and almost everyone knew the date and place. Few, however, knew what to expect or that they would have such a good time. At an early hour people began arriving and by the time supper was announced there were several hundred present from this and adjoining townships. The large new barn was used, the broad driveway being converted into a dining room. The rafters were hung with grains, vegetables and fruits as decorations. Light was furnished by lamps and Japanese lanterns, and all added to the unique appearance of the surroundings.

The place on which most interest was centered, however, was the table. This was set in the center of the hallway and reached almost the entire length of the room. It was loaded with the products of garden, orchard, and farm, prepared as only the women of this vicinity can, to please and satisfy the appetites of those who had been made hungry by the drive through the bracing air. A roast pig, grown almost past piggood, contributed by Wiley Davis, Sr., was a pleasant sight to the older people and brought back the memories of their younger days when the dish was a common one. (Mrs. Edith Wegeng says that this particular event made quite an impression on her young mind, and she can still vividly picture the roast pig with the red apple in its mouth.)

The supper was given for the benefit of the M. E. Church. The receipts were gratifying and speak well for Mr. and Mrs. Bellinger and their able corps of assistants.



Pet Miller Primmer at the Well

In 1903-04, the Epworth League was an active organization within the church. Epworth Leaguers who led the meetings according to the "topics" for January-June, 1903 were: Dr. A. L. Collins, Mrs. M. E. Scott, Erma Metters, William Boyer, C. A. Pricer, Mrs. M. B. Caldwell, A. E. Smith, John Ruhl, Lillie Hawkins, Allie Johnston, F. C. Stearns, Bessie Starling, Phoebe Metters, Mrs. M. Shively, Mrs. Olive Wright, Mrs. Gertrude Deacon, Mrs. Forrest Tanner, Edna Fisher, and D. W. Shively.

An Epworth League Rally was held in 1904. It "was a grand and glorious success in every way. The first regular service of the Rally was a song and praise service under the direction of the chorister, Irene Ford. Talks were made by A. E. Smith, C. A.



Pricer, A. L. Collins, T. S. Mitchell, Mrs. Dan Davis, Mrs. Olive Wright, Dr. Pierce Collins, Nellie Hume, Claudine Dick, Alice Johnston, Bessie Starling, and Estelle Ford."

Below are listed a few of the entries taken from the Ladies Aid Treasurer's Book:—December 1902, sold the old church carpet and received \$2.00; April 1903, paid F. K. Robeson \$94.39 for carpet (and pasted into the Treasurer's book was the cancelled check made out to F. K. Robeson and signed by Mrs. A. V. Purnell, treasurer of the Ladies Aid); March 1908, paid \$99.90 for church carpet (Mrs. Frank Taylor—Louise Rayburn at that time—remembers quite well helping lay the first carpet in the choir loft of the new church. Lou's helper was Paul Stearns. There was much enjoyment in the task so the tacks were placed almost too close together); November 1910, paid \$185.00 for the church steps; September 1912, paid Estelle Ford \$50.00 for the piano; March 1914, paid \$10.00 for the sidewalk; 1914, paid Lewis' \$145.64 for carpet; January 1915, received \$23.37 from the Tom Thumb Wedding (the persons in this wedding were Lois Foltz, Bride; Franklin Daniels, Groom; Charles Pricer as Best Man).



**Men's Baracca Sunday School Class**

First row, left to right: Frank Rayburn, Albert Jones, Elmer Pittman, Price Brackemyre, Frank Taylor, George Primmer, Harry Herriott  
 Second row from bottom, left to right: George Lewis, Matt Herriott, Ad Primmer, Verne Trinkle, Clarence Wright, Stanley Brown, Frank Hood  
 Third row from bottom, left to right: Charles Purnell, Francis Hazen, George Rising, Glenn Bryan  
 Fourth row from bottom, left to right: Earl Fisher, Ed Lewis, V. Hinton, Chet Buckles  
 Fifth row from bottom, left to right: Herschel Hume, Chauncey Fisher, Elmer Miller, Cecil Pittman  
 Top row, left to right: Lew Voss, Roy Primmer, Fred Voss, Calvin Rayburn, Ernest Stout, W. B. Behrens (teacher)



Sometime before 1914 the belfry of the church was struck by lightning and damaged from a windstorm to such an extent that it had to be rebuilt. At this time the belfry was changed in its general style from the tall pinnacle that it was to a lower structure.

Can we talk of the olden days in the church without mentioning the huge Christmas tree in the choir loft loaded with gifts for everyone. Much anticipation was experienced by all as they sat through the long program (each child reciting his verse or singing a song) and then came Jolly Saint "Nick" to distribute gifts, candy, apples, and oranges for all. This was one time when the front seats as well as the back were filled to overflowing.

The Rev. and Mrs. U. G. Johnston are both deceased but their only daughter, Catherine, writes from Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, "We only lived in one other town, Saybrook, where we knew and liked the people as we did those people at Mahomet. . . . I can remember the clean new smell of the parsonage there because we were the first ones to live in it, and the day some of the men brought in two small maple trees from along the river and planted them in the front yard. . . . I wonder if the apple tree between the church and the parsonage is still there. Many is the time that Dad had to get a ladder and rescue me from the branches because I could always climb trees but could seldom climb down, besides I was too sick from eating the green apples to make the effort. Then there was the Sunday school Hallowe'en Party that they had at our house and I never will forget the string cobweb on the stairs and your father's (the letter was written to Isabelle Purnell) mask which frightened me half to death even after he reassured me by taking it off. . . . Just last week I dreamed of Mahomet and gathering bluebells along the Sangamon and all next day I thought of all of you wonderful people. At the age of six I had a tremendous crush on Clarence Rayburn and would make eyes at him over the banister whenever Mother had the Standard Bearer's meeting at our house. . . . The First World War was going on at that time and ended while we lived there and I well remember when J. C. W. Pittman called Dad at about 4 A. M. one morning and told him that the war was ended and Dad tucking his nightshirt into some trousers and running next door to ring the church bell. . . . Robert Wright (I knocked two of his front teeth out once in a fight!) . . . Please tell everyone hello for me."



**Sunday School Picnic**

In reviewing the old ledger containing the minutes of the meetings of the Official Board, notes of interest were found and will be dated with the notation (OB).

Many items of news have been taken from various issues of the Mahomet Sucker State. Such will be designated by date and the notation (SS).

- 1912 (SS). Musical and literary program given by the Epworth Culture Club at the Methodist Church: Instrumental solo, Elsie Black; vocal solo, Alice Collier; reading, Mrs. Ethel Rayburn; recitation, Ella Herriott; vocal solo, Clelia Harland; original poem, Rev. C. W. Caseley; instrumental solo, Freda Pike; recitation, Audie Foster; vocal trio, Behrens family; reading, Mrs. May Rayburn; vocal solo, Merle Hayward; song, Irene Ford.
- 1913 (SS). Elsie Black was presented \$10 in recognition of services during the recent revival. . . . The Methodist Church has purchased a new cathedral window made of the best quality opalescent glass of finest workmanship and design. It will be placed in the west end of the audience room.
- 1915 (SS). A program will be rendered at the M. E. Church Sunday evening at 7:30 P. M. Those participating will be Rev. Strevey, Catherine Pittman, Edith Trinkle, Robert Dale, Oscar Dale, Viola Pittman, Mary Dale, Franklin Daniels, Nadine Stout, Otto Honey, Rex Davis, Ralph Foster, Gertrude Smith, and Louise Purnell. . . . The following Epworth Culture Club program will be given Friday evening: Piano solo, Mrs. Bauman; vocal solo, Alene Parker; reading, Mrs. F. E. Wright; piano solo, Eleanor Herriott; reading, Miss Flag; reading, Ruth Bishop; duet, Misses Dickson; vocal solo, Charles Purnell; reading, Mrs. Audie Lindsey; piano solo, Freda Pike; vocal solo, Marie Trinkle; vocal solo, Oscar Dale. . . .

"Someone took my lantern from the landing at the M. E. Church and left an old rusty lantern that looks as if it had never been cleaned. My lantern had a red string tied to the handle for a matter of identification. Whoever took it would know they got the wrong and better lantern, and if they are honest will return it; if they are not honest they will keep it and of course remove the red string. I'd rather be the loser of a lantern than the stealer of one." Robert Wright.

- 1916 (SS). Wednesday afternoon the M. E. Parsonage was discovered to be on fire, and within a few minutes many people were on the scene. The fire had such a start that almost everything upstairs burned, including Rev. Smith's library which cost \$2500 and also all of the church records. The parsonage was insured for \$1400. . . . Excavation for the new Methodist parsonage has been completed, and W. E. Johnston has started the carpenter work.

(OB). The total cost of the Methodist parsonage was \$3,050.45. There was a deficit of \$102 which had to be borrowed.

- 1917 (OB). Sale of coal house \$10; sweeping chimneys \$1.05; allowed pastor's salary \$100 for the month of December; janitor's salary (Roscoe Smith) for December \$15. . . . Back rent \$2.50 paid to Mrs. Rebecca Herriott for Pastor Smith's rent. (He lived in Mrs. Herriott's house—where Gladys Ballett now lives—while the new parsonage was being built). . . . Taxes \$20.00. . . . J. C. W.

Pittman was appointed to look after the lighting plant...The President of the M. E. Culture Club and the President of the Ladies Aid Society were appointed as a committee to arrange some special musical and literary program, the proceeds of same to wipe out all indebtedness against the new parsonage...Work of enlarging the basement was started by the Young Married People's Class...A letter was read, at one of the Board Meetings, from Miss Adah Quayle, Secretary of the Chi Lota Literary Society, thanking the church for the use of church basement for a school party held there March 16...At the meeting of the Official Board the secretary-treasurer reported \$293.54 on hand, with bills amounting to \$228.00, thus leaving a surplus of \$65.54...Pastor's salary for the new year was raised to \$1300...Ushers will be Roscoe Smith, Charles Purnell, Arch Herriott, and Frank Taylor.

(SS). The Epworth League elected the following officers Sunday evening: President, Roscoe Smith; vice presidents, Lena Miller, Mrs. Laura Purnell, Marie Trinkle, Robert Rayburn; treasurer, Fred Mohr; secretary, Gertrude Smith; organist, Zaye McCracken; chorister, Oscar Dale, Jr...The League has an enrollment of forty-five members, with an average attendance of thirty-two.

1918 (SS). Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Miller entertained the Young People's Married Class of the Methodist Church in their home Friday evening. The trip was made to their home at Rising in sleds. There were 48 present...The Standard Bearers met at the Methodist parsonage Monday night and elected the following officers: President, Ione Pricer; vice president, Lena Miller; corresponding secretary, Nellie Stout; recording secretary, Pearl Carter; treasurer, Robert Rayburn; mite-box superintendent, Faye Miller.

(OB). Ed Armstrong was hired as church janitor. It was moved and carried that we adopt and have signed the written contract "Duties of the Janitor"—one copy to be held by the Janitor and one copy to be held by Robert Wright, Chairman of Trustees...It was also decided to have union services at Thanksgiving with the Baptist Church...A letter was read from F. H. McMullen, Seymour, tendering the pastor \$5.00 and the janitor \$1.00 for kindness shown and use of the church for his Mother's funeral. By unanimous vote of the board the pastor and the janitor accepted the gift...The pastor's salary for the new year is to be \$1500...It was voted that the best gasoline be bought for the light plant. A graduation gift was given Freda Pike in appreciation of her services as pianist...The church bought Rev. Johnston's range (when they left) for \$35 with understanding that it was to be left in the parsonage.

It is interesting to note that each month the Official Board met, if for no other reason than to vote that the pastor and janitor be paid their salaries. Sometimes there was no money in the treasury, but they voted that the salaries should be paid if and when they did have the money.

1919 (OB). Adjutant Harley Smith was given \$225.77 for conducting the revival. Bids are being taken for the wiring of the church and

parsonage... Must hire a janitor and the Board has the right to reject any or all bids for same. Mrs. Nancy Wilson was hired as janitor for \$20... Paid \$3.82 for gas and mantles.

There is no record as to when the balcony was built in our church but it was believed to have been around 1920. J. C. W. Pittman paid for the expense of this room. The members of the Young Married People's Class—"The Achievement Class" furnished this room, each member buying his own chair. At this time Mrs. Olive McNeil was the teacher.

Mr. J. C. W. Pittman was Sunday school Superintendent for twenty-four years. Mr. William Caldwell was Sunday school Treasurer for many years—the exact number is unknown. Mrs. Len Rayburn taught the Beginners Class for many years. Each Sunday Mrs. Rayburn told Bible stories and gave the children a leaflet with a story in it and a small colored picture (3x4) of some Bible character and the story on the back of it. When you had attended regularly for so many Sundays you were presented a large 10x12 sized picture in sepia. There was only the one teacher for all Beginners. Florence Wigton Weatherford remembers the many parties Mrs. Rayburn held for the pupils and her always serving pink homemade ice cream.

1920 (OB). The light bill of \$4.90 was paid and \$180 was borrowed to meet current church expenses. The church was painted, and the interior redecorated, with Fred Roberts doing the work... It was recorded that the church had an orchestra of twenty-eight members under the direction of Dr. E. A. Hedges. This orchestra played for the regular services; they gave concerts at Macon, Atlanta, Mansfield, and near-by towns.



**Methodist Church Orchestra**

Top row, left to right: Glenn Shell, Roy Keene, Coy Warner, Lee Brown, Virgil Starkey, George Warner, S. Starkey, Fred Mohr  
 Third row, left to right: Charles Purnell, Frank Taylor, Elsie Davis, Nellie Stout, E. A. Hedges, Edna Hoit, Elmer Miller, Roscoe Smith  
 Second row, left to right: Eva Smith, Dee Daniels, Emma Hedges, Sadie Carter, Gertrude Smith, Freda Pike, Ruth Lindsey, Zaye McCracken  
 Front row, left to right: Verne McCracken, Louise Purnell, Faye Miller, Mabel Roberts, Della Wilson, Cleoh Dollahon, Harold Herriott

1922 (OB). There was not sufficient money on hand to meet the current bills so the matter was left in the hands of the Finance Committee.

The Ladies Aid Treasurer's book showed receipts of \$92.04 from the wolf drive on February 11, 1922.

1923. Mrs. McNeill became Sunday School Superintendent. Mrs. Estelle Pugh began teaching the Achievement class. (Although Mrs. Pugh has not taught the same class she has been teaching 32 years, missing only to serve as Lay Delegate at Conference or some other worthwhile project.)

(SS). Rev. C. H. Davis, O. M. Truitt, Mary Dale, Ruth and Mary McNeill, Della Wilson, Mary Miller, Pauline Holloway, and Veronica Davis attended the Epworth League Convention at Atlanta on Tuesday and Wednesday.

(OB). A vote of appreciation was extended to the men who donated labor on the church annex. (It is believed that the annex referred to is the one over the east basement steps, although it does not say.) This was built by the Young Married People's Class.

Some of the farm sales at which the Ladies Aid Society served during the years from 1923 through 1929, and their receipts, according to the Treasurer's Book, were: December 29, 1923, Elmer Miller—\$93.26; January 23, 1924, Mohr—\$37.37; January 24, 1927, Roy Clapper—\$43.00; January 26, 1927, Zena Keene—\$78.34; February 1, 1928, Mohr—\$46.93; February 28, 1928, Ira Dollahon—\$65.50; February 15, 1929, Art McCracken—\$42.60.

1924 (OB). Roscoe Smith was elected chairman of the Finance Committee to borrow money each month to pay the bills...The Official Board discussed raising money for the paving fund.

1925 (OB). Many women were present at the meeting of the Board to discuss remodeling the basement. However, nothing was decided except changing the partition of the coal bins...Cutting down the apple tree west of the church was discussed. (Isabelle Purnell still has two switches from this old apple tree "among her souvenirs"—wonder why?)...Eight young people attended Epworth League Institute held in Jacksonville...It was decided that pamphlets should be issued showing the contributions of the members of the church...It was decided that the windows back of the pulpit should be removed, and that the church and parsonage should be painted. The committee in charge is made up of the officers of the Social Union: President, Mrs. Charles Purnell; vice president, Mrs. Ernest Stout; and secretary-treasurer, Mrs. Charles Patton. (This was the first year the organization was called "Social Union"; formerly, it was the Ladies Aid.)

1926 (OB). M. K. Busey was elected church treasurer on the resignation of Alice Johnston...The Board voted to raise the minister's salary to \$1800 and to telegraph Dr. Havighurst on Monday to return Mr. Petty to our charge...Charles Purnell was elected secretary of the Official Board.





### First Officers of the Social Union

Left to right:

Mrs. Charles Purnell,  
President

Mrs. Ernest Stout,  
Vice President

Mrs. Charles Patton,  
Secretary-Treasurer

The Standard Bearers program for 1926 showed the following organization: Mrs. Frank Rayburn was leader. Active members included Viola Carter, Louise Purnell, Pauline Hickle, Aline Dollahon, Robert Dale, Rex Davis, Frances Patton, Viola Pittman, Isabelle Purnell, Mary Cooke, Willis Lindsey, Nadine Stout, Lois Davis, Kenneth Smoot, Catherine Pittman, Musa Roberts, Amy Wood, Frank Herriott, Howard Jones, Pauline Herriott, Linden Hinton, Richard Foster, Lois Davis, Mary Phillippe, Mary Campbell, Franklin Daniels, Hilda Campbell, Paul Buckles, Elsie Smith, Elizabeth Lewis, Don Miller, and Mary Jane Lindsey.

1927 (OB). The matter of conducting a Vacation Bible School as a community school was discussed. . . .The Board voted that a petition be sent to the grade and high school boards, asking that teachers take more interest in the churches. . . .The Board voted to hold revival meetings for three weeks.

Epworth Leaguers produced plays each summer to earn money for expenses of attending institutes held annually at Old Salem near Petersburg. The play "Yimmie Jonson's Yob" was given with the following taking parts: Willis Lindsey, Frank Herriott, Franklin Daniels, Cleoh Dollahon, Rex Davis, Aline Dollahon, Nadine Stout, Isabelle Purnell, Lois Davis, and Louise Purnell. . . .Twenty-five members of the Epworth League sang carols Christmas Eve. . . .The Epworth League Topic Cards for the months January-June showed the following as leaders: Rev. B. M. Petty, Louise Purnell, Franklin Daniels, Lois Davis, Elizabeth Lewis, Pauline Hickle, Aline Dollahon, Frances Patton, Victor Wood, Donald Miller, Amy Wood, Mary Phillippe, Isabelle Purnell, Irene Gates, Helen Rayburn, Glen Gates, Mrs. Petty, Lois Foltz, Mary Campbell, Helen Trinkle, Howard Jones, Blanche McClellan, and Pauline Herriott.

- 1928 (OB). The Official Board voted to continue our own evening services during the summer rather than have Union services... Len Rayburn was elected church treasurer.
- 1929 (OB). The Board voted to raise \$800 by public offering to repair the church, plaster, redecorate, etc.



**Isabelle Purnell and Sunday School Class**

Back row, left to right: Margaret Sloan, Bert Hickle, Jr., James McCall, Eugene Armstrong, Daisy Campbell, Robert Lindsey, Phillip Mohr, Gwendolyn Miller, Avis Yancey and ?  
 Front row, left to right: Jannette Cooke, Neva Lewis, Phyllis Gulick, Louise Ponder, and John Ponder

1930. A birthday party was held, with Rev. B. D. Mallinson, pastor, in charge. Fifty-two persons were listed with their respective birth dates.
- (OB). It was decided at the meeting of the Official Board that the church doors should be repaired, and keys be bought for the west doors.
- 1931 (SS). Mrs. Len Rayburn entertained at a "Rainbow Party" Wednesday. Guests were members of the W. F. M. S.
- (OB). It was voted by the Official Board that \$200 should be borrowed to pay the pastor and the janitor, Roscoe Smith... The Board discussed placing a mortgage on the church parsonage if it could not raise the money to pay the church debt.
- 1932 (OB). The Official Board reported a shortage of \$843 that had been pledged so a committee was appointed to see about joining with the Bondville Church. (This unification never took place.)
- 1933 (OB). The Board voted that all regular bills be allowed and paid, when the money is available.
- (SS). The Social Union Quilt Exhibit was held in the Methodist

Church parlors. Miss Louise Purnell received the quilt for having the largest number of pieces in a block nine inches square. Her block contained 425 pieces.

Social Union Treasurer's books. Selling handiwacks and magazine subscriptions.

- 1934 (SS). One hundred forty mothers and daughters attended the Mother-Daughter Banquet held Thursday in the basement of the church. A program was given with Mrs. Charles Pugh as toastmistress. Invocation by Louise Purnell; welcome, Mrs. Minerva Shively; toast to Mother, Mrs. Philip Wegeng; solos by Mrs. Roy Clapper; address, Mrs. Grover Reeser of Farmer City . . . The Epworth League installed the following cabinet: President, Lucille Moore; first vice president, Edith Clapper; second vice president, Alma Primmer; third vice president, Mary Purnell; fourth vice presidents, Doris Moore and Gerald Miller; secretary-treasurer, Margaret Wood; pianist, Mary Phillippe; chorister, Frankin Tickner.

1935. These minutes of the W. F. M. S. were taken from the Secretary's book:

The W. F. M. S. met at the home of Mrs. Kate Herriott and Eleanor McCall. Mrs. Shively gave the devotions. Irene Ford reported that \$100.04 had been paid out during the year. All present officers were re-elected for another year: President, Laura Purnell; vice president, Fannie Rayburn; secretary, Lizzie Truitt; financial secretary, Irene Ford; corresponding secretary, Estelle Ford; special work superintendents, Hazel Stout, Sadie Carter, and Gladys Ballett. There were nine present; the collection was seventy cents.

- (SS). Following are the officers of the Methodist Church for the year 1935-36: Trustees: Arch Herriott, Charles Purnell, J. R. Davis, Len Rayburn, George Miller, Ernest Stout, W. O. Dale, LeRoy Primmer, and Wilson Miller; Stewards: LeRoy Primmer, Wilson Miller, Roscoe Smith, Elmer Miller, Charles Patton, T. C. Herriott, Clarence Rayburn, Frank Taylor, Fred Rayburn, John Ruhl, M. A. Phillippe, Ad Primmer, Mrs. Agnes Blue, Mrs. Bernice Wright, Mrs. Sadie Carter, Mrs. Myrtle Campbell, J. M. Dowell; disbursing steward, Mrs. Fannie Rayburn; communion steward, Mrs. Minerva Shively; Sunday school superintendent, Mrs. Olive McNeill; president of Epworth League, Joe Pugh; president of W. F. M. S., Mrs. Laura Purnell; president of Social Union, Mrs. Adah Sloan.

The celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the building of the present Methodist Church was observed in conjunction with Rally Day and Homecoming. Sunday school attendance was one hundred fifty. Special numbers included a talk by J. M. Dowell, reading by Geraldine Herriott, solo by Charles Purnell, special music by Mrs. H. A. Ballett and Mrs. Wilson Miller. At noon a chicken dinner was served to about two hundred people. The afternoon program consisted of readings by Doris Moore and Virginia Smoot; solo, Clair Kokensparger; duet by Mrs. Charles Dale and Calvin Rayburn; trio by Ernest Smith



Clair Kokensparger, and Charles Purnell. Speakers were Rev William Hampton of Shiloh who was sent from this church six years ago as a local preacher; Rev. B. D. Mallinson, Rev. B. M. Petty, Charles Dale, and Mrs. Robert Truitt.

Jitney Supper at the church with all items on the menu 5c per serving... Sunday school officers for the new year are: Superintendent, Mrs. Olive McNeill; assistant superintendent, John Ruhl; secretary, Lucille Moore; assistant secretary, Thelma Bryant; treasurer, Mrs. Z. C. Keene; pianist, Elizabeth Davis; assistant pianist, Helen Lindsey; librarian, Mary Purnell; primary superintendent, Mrs. M. A. Phillippe; home department, Mrs. Len Wigton and Mrs. W. O. Dale; chorister, Mrs. Sadie Carter; temperance, A. E. Smith; missionary superintendent, Mrs. Charles Purnell.

- 1936 (SS). The Methodist Sunday school will conduct a two weeks' vacation Bible school at the church, beginning Monday, June 1st ... The Third Annual Mother-Daughter Banquet sponsored by the Social Union was held last week with more than two hundred persons attending. Mrs. Ruth Carson had charge of the program, "The Garden of Motherhood." Mother's toast to the daughters was given by Mrs. Len Rayburn and the daughter's toast by Mrs. Clarence Rayburn. Group singing was led by Isabelle Purnell with Louise Purnell at the piano. Mrs. Len Wigton, Mrs. Fred Moore, Mrs. George McCall, and Mrs. Alva Martin were in charge of the kitchen; Mrs. Edith Wegeng was chairman of decorations, and Roy Johnson and nine boys served.
- 1936 (OB). Voted to put in a gravel street west of the parsonage to the garage so the Reverend could get out under all conditions.
- 1937 (OB). The issue, "Shall the village authorize the sale of liquor?" was to be voted on at the election so the matter was discussed in the Meeting of the Official Board on ways the Church could work towards its defeat. (The issue was voted down.)
- (SS). At the morning worship service thirty-two were baptized. Thirty-six were accepted into full membership. The first service of the day was the Third Annual Sunrise Breakfast and Service of the Baptist and Methodist young people at which time there were about sixty present. There were 195 in the Sunday school and more than 200 in the morning worship service. At the Sunday school hour, Louise Purnell presented New Testaments to nine girls of the Kola Class in recognition of their attendance the past four months. Those receiving Testaments were Daisy Campbell, Aline Herriott, Alma Williamson, Louise Ponder, Lois Pointer, Evelyn Pointer, Mary Jones, Irene LeFever, and Hetta Webb.

The Annual June Convention of the Champaign District Epworth League was held in Mansfield Tuesday afternoon and evening. Mahomet was one of the three Honor Chapters. Those attending from Mahomet were Misses Lois Williamson, Frances Dees, Virginia Smoot, Louise Purnell, Doris Moore, Frances Lindsey, Hetta Webb, Mrs. Ruth Carson, Ralph Webb and Rev.

J. W. Dees. Louise Purnell was installed as a member of the Champaign District Cabinet.

Kings Heralds met at the church on Saturday and reorganized their society, a branch of the Woman's Missionary Society. The following girls were members: Irene LeFever, Mary Jones, Gwendolyn Miller, Daisy Campbell, Louise Ponder, Betty Lou Carson, Lois Pointer, Margaret Smith, Phyllis Jean Carson, Jeanette Cooke, Joyce Cooke.

The Methodist Cook Book, sponsored by the Social Union, was published in 1936-37. The committee in charge was Mrs. Charles Purnell, Mrs. Guy Webb, and Mrs. Ernest Stout. Five hundred copies were printed and sold at 50c each.

The Epworth League Mid-winter Institute closed with a banquet at Mansfield Tuesday evening, served to one hundred twenty-five persons. Certificates were awarded by the registrar, Louise Purnell, to one hundred Leaguers. Twenty-three local people received certificates: Alice Loy, Ruth Truitt, Ruby Lindsey, Harold Wyatt, Aletha Hale, Marie Gulick, Hetta Webb, Dannie Scales, Ralph Webb, John Jones, Irene LeFever, Nile Ray, Lois Williamson, Frances Dees, Merle Wyatt, Philip Buker, Daisy Campbell, Frances Lindsey, Virginia Smoot, Lenora Jones, Bobbie Roberts, James Kroner, and Mrs. Ruth Carson.

Fathers and sons to the number of 112 attended the banquet sponsored by the Social Union Saturday evening. J. M. Dowell served as toastmaster. Roscoe Smith spoke, representing the fathers, and Lloyd Dees represented the sons. A quartet composed of E. H. Smith, V. C. Kokensparger, Charles Purnell, and Gerald Miller sang, with Louise Purnell at the piano.

- 1938 (SS). The Social Union Committee who served the Mother-Daughter Banquet report a net profit of \$56.56. . . . Seventy-five attended the Social Union Fair and Quilt Exhibit held Thursday afternoon at the home of Mrs. Charles Purnell. In the various booths were Mexican hairless pig, bats in captivity, world's fastest runner, fortune telling, etc. Mrs. Dan Smoot was dressed to represent the costume of "Fair Day" in the past, and Mrs. Elmer Miller, posing as a blind lady, collected fifteen cents. James Kroner and Richard Shively, dressed as clowns, furnished much amusement. Refreshments of pink lemonade and wafers were served. Assistant hostesses were Mesdames Fred Moore, Len Wigton, Harold Howe, V. C. Kokensparger, Ed Campbell, Alva Martin, George Dunlap, Raymond Primmer, Elmer Miller, Harry Herriott, and Dan Smoot.

Taken from W. F. M. S. Minutes: The W. F. M. S. met in the home of Mrs. Shively for the annual missionary banquet. There were twenty in attendance. Echoes from the group meeting held in Danville were given by Mrs. Dees, Mrs. Stout, Mrs. Purnell, Mrs. Holloway, and Mrs. Wegeng. The Mystery Box questions were conducted by Irene Ford.

- (SS). The M. E. Church of Mahomet broadcasted Morning Devotions on Radio Station WDWS, Champaign, from 8:45 to 9:00. Local

musical talent was presented prior to the message given by Rev. J. W. Dees.

1939 (OB). Because of the unification of the three branches of Methodism, the church voted to change the name from Mahomet Methodist Episcopal to Mahomet Methodist Church. It was moved by Estelle Ford, the oldest member present, and seconded by Robert Holt, the youngest member present. The motion was carried. . . . At a called meeting of the Board of Trustees it was voted to install city water in the parsonage and the church. . . . It was reported that \$15 is needed to balance the budget, but it is believed that the money will be raised in time for the church to be on the District Honor Roll.

1940 (OB). Louise Purnell is to be the church pianist. Plans are being made to have a breakfast at the church on August 25, preceding the Every Member Canvass. The pastor's salary was raised from \$1200 to \$1400.

1941 The Epworth League name was changed to Methodist Youth Fellowship.

Mrs. Olive McNeill, Sunday school superintendent, reported 200 on the Sunday school roll, with an average attendance of 140. A new Young People's Class has been organized with James Parker as teacher. J. M. Dowell is teacher of the Achievement Class. . . . It was voted to have union meetings with the Baptists on alternate Sunday evenings until June. . . . The Board voted to paint the church and parsonage. . . . This year the conference year will be only nine months long because in the future the conference year will end in June rather than in September. . . . \$10 was subscribed for the church bulletins. (This is the beginning of regular printed bulletins.)

A farewell party was held at the church Saturday evening in the form of a pot luck supper honoring Louise Purnell, who is leaving our community to accept a position as church secretary of the Chicago Temple. Miss Purnell has taught in Mahomet for the past eight years, and during this time she has been a most valuable worker in the church as pianist, counselor of the Epworth League, Sunday school teacher, lay delegate to the Annual Conference, etc. Miss Purnell was presented with a gift in recognition of her services.



**Louise Purnell Jones and Husband**

The pot luck supper and Official Board meeting was held at the parsonage. (This represents the beginning of the Board's monthly pot luck suppers.)

- 1942 (OB). Harold Hickle was confirmed as Sunday school superintendent. . . . The Board voted to have the coal bin filled because of fear of coal shortage. . . . The Board discussed renting the church basement to the township to hold elections when the new precinct is established, but this was not approved.
- 1943 (SS). Union Good Friday Services will be held at the Baptist Church. . . . With much work yet to be done, the Methodist Church will present a much improved appearance for Easter Sunday. It was decided that the seats should be varnished, and twenty-six volunteered their services. The new carpet arrived Tuesday, and is being laid this week. . . . The Methodist Church reached its goal of 500 members Easter Sunday when seventeen were taken in at the morning worship service. . . . Isabell Pasley was honored at the recent district meeting of the Methodist Youth Fellowship held at Mansfield when she was elected as its president. Mahomet was also honored when Darlene Lindsey won the speech contest.
- (OB). The Board voted to have a pot luck dinner to celebrate the purchasing of the new church carpet, repairing of the floors, and refinishing the floors and pews. Folders are to be printed, listing the 500 members of the church. . . . The matter of repairing or razing the barn at the parsonage was discussed, but it was decided not to rebuild until later. . . . Charles Purnell is Sunday School Superintendent.
- 1944 (OB). All members of the church who have not attended services during the past year are to be called upon. . . . The minister's salary was increased to \$3,000. . . . Dr. Northcott of Champaign outlined to the Official Board the "Crusade for Christ" movement which is being carried out in all Methodist churches of the United States. Mahomet's share in the \$25,000,000 fund is \$1500.
- (SS). The M. Y. F. received a pennant for winning first place in the artistic class at the Annual Booth Festival at Cunningham Children's Home. Those who set up the display were Gwendolyn Miller, James Pasley, Bobbie Roberts, and Peggy Smoot. . . . The Good Cheer Sunday School Class held its Annual Christmas Party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Jess Mitchell. Officers for the new year were elected: Teacher emeritus, Mrs. Minerva Shively; teachers, Mrs. Edd Lett; assistant teacher, Mettie Downs; president, Mrs. Len Rayburn; vice president, Mrs. Bert Warner; secretary, Mrs. Sadie Carter; treasurer, Mrs. Emma Carter; mystery pal secretary, Mrs. Ethel Jones; visiting committee, Irene Ford, Mrs. Jess Mitchell, Mrs. Ed Campbell, Mrs. Anna Wood, and Mrs. Ethel Jones.
- 1945 (OB). The Official Board voted to meet with some from other churches to organize for the Wet-Dry Issue which will come up at the spring election. . . . Hazel Stout, Cora Patton, and Gladys Ballett were appointed as a general committee for the

fifty-year celebration of our church...City water was installed in the parsonage.

- (SS). The fiftieth year for the present Methodist Church building and the nintieth year for Methodism in Mahomet, was celebrated with Rev. H. K. Gaither, pastor in charge. A basket dinner was served at noon. The afternoon's program was: Quartet, C. A. Morehouse, Calvin Rayburn, Charles Purnell, and Frank Rayburn; greetings from former ministers, Rev. B. M. Petty, Rev. J. W. Dees, and Rev. H. Ray Funk; solo. Robert J. Jones, Chicago; history of the Mahomet Church, Mrs. Philip Wegeng; duet, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Morehouse; message, Dr. C. C. Nordling, District Superintendent.



**Two Pictures Taken at a  
Methodist Men Meeting**





- 1946 (OB) A committee was appointed to investigate plans, with costs for an inside stairway to the basement....A goal of \$1000 was set for the repairing of the church. Rev. Gaither was asked to get an architect's plans and estimate on the remodeling of the church...Methodist Men was organized...Rev. and Mrs. H. K. Gaither were given a new Chevrolet for Christmas.
- 1947 (OB). Gladys Ballett was elected secretary of the Official Board on the death of Charles Purnell, who had served in that capacity since 1926...Two offering plates and candelabra were dedicated in memory of Charles S. Purnell.
- 1948 (OB). The new doors for the east entrance were made memorials for Estelle and Irene Ford. A brass plate is to be installed bearing their names.
- 1949 The first year for the Easter Sunrise Services at the Lake of the Woods.



**Easter Sunrise Services at the Lake of the Woods**

- 1950 (SS). Men's Fish Fry at the Lake of the Woods.
- 1951 (OB). There is now \$250 in the organ fund. Birdie Bridges presented to the church money for an organ fund as a memorial to her mother, Mrs. Sadie Carter.
- 1953 Further discussion of remodeling and rebuilding resulted in the following reports: Heating proposal, \$4200; revamping basement ceiling and floors, kitchen and lighting, \$2500; installing rest rooms \$1500; basement stairs and outside steps, \$1000; or a total of \$9200. The goal for improvements was set at \$10,000. (Original proposal for improvements was \$1,000.)...Early Sunday morning services will be continued through July. Some of the Sunday school classes are meeting in the grade school while the basement is being repaired.
- 1954 Nine gospel teams have made forty visitations. A large crowd attended the Easter Sunrise at the Lake of the Woods...The average attendance at the Vacation Bible School was 82; 48 were enrolled in the kindergarten...Family Night Services started and will continue monthly through May. A motion was made in 1951 for the purchase of a new communion tablecloth, but this was never secured so Mr. and Mrs. Frank W. Taylor bought one and presented it to the church...Annual bazaar, country store, and chicken supper...Our Church is to pay a four cents per capita to the Methodist Television Ministry.



J. A. and Ellen Bellinger



Mary Scott

**DECEASED  
OFFICIAL  
BOARD  
MEMBERS  
1916-1950**



Louisa and George Miller



Jay and Lou Davis



Robert Wright



J. C. W. Pittman



D. W. Shively



Minerva Shively



Alice Johnston



Anna Herriott



Mary B. Caldwell



William Caldwell



Grace Dale



W. O. Dale



John Ruhl



Fred Rayburn



Arch Herriott



Charles Purnell



Elmer Miller



Frank Jahr



1955 (OB). Young People's Conference and the Christian Witness Mission. ...Two activities have engaged the interest of the members of the church during this past year: Remodeling the church and working on the centennial, the theme of which is "Life is good in Mahomet. U. S. A." The remodeling has included new oil burner furnaces, covering the old registers in the sanctuary, refinishing the entire basement in knotty pine with the platinum finish, the installation of new kitchen equipment, rearranging the lighting system, rest rooms in the basement, a new inside stairway, rebuilding the outside steps, new tables for the dining room, installing new folding curtains in the basement, a public address system, and other items of modernization making the basement more usable for religious education and fellowship.

The Amici Class (young married people) is one of our most active ones. Just recently they did a fine job in landscaping of the church premises. They have also placed church signs on the four roads leading into the town.

The Centennial was held Friday, April 29, through Sunday, May 1.

The program Friday evening included a pageant in four acts written by Gladys Clapper and Lulu Buker.



**Centennial Reception Committee**

Left to right: Millie Young, Gertrude Herriott, Lloyde Primmer, Estelle Pugh, and Laura Purnell. Frank W. Taylor, another member of the committee, was not present when the photo was made.



Picture taken after Palm Sunday Service, April 3, 1955. Twenty-three youngsters baptized this Sunday.

As the book goes to press we learn from Mrs. Bess Warner that Mrs. Diana Newell, grandmother of Mrs. Warner, taught the primary Sunday school class until 1895. When they moved to the new church Mrs. Newell (a crippled lady) quit teaching only because the distance was too great to walk. Mrs. Minnie Clapper tells, "My first date with Frank Clapper was in the old church when I was sixteen years of age. Mr. Clapper asked 'Aunt Ag' Blue to ask me if I would go with him to the lecture at the church. There was a chinaman talking that night. There were only two things to go to in those days—church or literaries. Frank let me out at the front stile. The chinaman talked so long and it was such a long drive home with the horse and buggy." Charles Gifford has in his possession two books—the old Methodist Hymnal Book (words without music) which had belonged to Mrs. Mary E. Scott (this book was originally presented to Mrs. E. J. Davidson on October 11, 1879 by Mrs. J. W. Sinnock) and "Memoir of Carvosso" from the old Methodist Episcopal Sunday school library (number 193). Mr. Fred Stearns sent to us some framed cards showing how the Methodist members paid their dues. These cards were issued quarterly by the Minister. One was the card of George Pittman (grandfather of Fred) dated May 20, 1855 signed by the Pastor, J. J. Hill. (Our records show that the first minister was Rev. Garner so we believe this card was given when the Methodist Church at Mahomet was on the Monticello Circuit. The Middletown Circuit was established this same year.) Also received were "Rewards of Merit" given to Jacob Pittman by Mrs. E. Savage, Inst. and to E. Pitman by A. L. Flower, Ins. (Perhaps the Inst. or Ins. stands for Instructor.) These certificates of good behavior were given in evidence of the standards the church had then. In those days it meant something to be a part of the church—then one's Christian character had to match his confession of faith, his honor, and membership in the church. To be all this, character had to be beyond reproach and the church in recognizing this, issued the certificates.

## EARLY HISTORY OF MAHOMET

**M**AHOMET today is a scenic little town of some 1000 inhabitants on the west bank of the Sangamon River at the intersection of two paved highways, Routes 47 and 150. This location was chosen 123 years ago as a settlement of a dozen families on an Indian trail. Champaign, the home of the University of Illinois, is just ten miles from Mahomet. Many of the residents of Mahomet are employed in Champaign.

It is an old saying that if anyone has ever drunk from the old Sangamon River, or got his feet in the Sangamon, or smelled of the Sangamon, he will always be back—or will never leave.

Mahomet was first settled in 1830. The original plat of Middletown was surveyed and drawn up in 1832 by Daniel Porter, but could not be recorded until there was a county organization. This organization, the government land office, was for this section of the country, located at Danville.

This location was chosen because of two important means of livelihood: water (Sangamon River) and fuel (timber). Too, it was halfway between Danville and Bloomington.

This area was early occupied by Indians. The original tribe of Indians living in Champaign County were called Kickapoos and were one of the tribes composing the Illinois Nation, called Illini. Near the gravel pit of what was the Clark Pfiester farm was the place called "Bloody Bend." The exact reason for this name is unknown; however, we do know that Mr. Pfiester had a fine collection of Indian arrowheads which he had picked up on his land which leads us to think that possibly an Indian battle had been fought there.

The citizens of Mahomet area, fearing a raid during the period of the Black Hawk War, met in the Jonathan Maxwell home which was located at that time about 200 feet south of the bridge on the road going by the old Ernest Stout residence to make war plans; however, the raid never materialized.

On March 15, 1836, Mr. Porter entered the southeast quarter of the northwest quarter of section 15, and placed on record a town plat covering thirty-eight lots of that entry which he named Middletown. The area extended from the Sangamon River west to the present site of the Masonic Building. The plat conformed to the present Bloomington Road and was the original of the village of Mahomet.

We cannot find a record as to just when the post office was changed from Middletown to that of Mahomet, but some are of the opinion that the change must have been made about 1840 because the maps of Illinois under date of 1845 called this place Mahomet. For many years mail was forwarded here, addressed to Middletown, Mahomet P. O.

Legend says it had originally been named Middletown because it was halfway between Danville and Bloomington. The name was changed from Middletown to Mahomet because there was a town named Middletown in Logan County.

There are several different stories, some of which are contradictory, regarding the name Mahomet. Authorities do not agree upon the dates of the change from Middletown to Mahomet.

"It is named after an Indian Chief," says Mrs. Mae Rayburn.

An article which was originally printed in the Daily Pantagraph in 1888 and later reprinted in the Sucker State says: "Capt. Brown, founder



of the Sucker State, proposed the name of Mahomet, and said it was as heathenish a country as he knew of and ought to have a heathen name." This is a mistake.

The post office was named by someone in the Post Office Department at Washington, D. C., without so far as we have ever been able to learn, consulting anyone here.

The old Masonic Lodge records say: "The name Mahomet was selected because the Masonic lodge in Middletown was known as "Mahomet Lodge, U. D." Records show that the dispensation was granted January 23, 1856, by W. B. Herrick, then Grand Master of Illinois, to open a lodge of Masons at Middletown, Champaign County, Illinois, to be known as "Mahomet Lodge, U. D."

When the Indiana, Bloomington, and Western Railway (later called in jest the "I Better Walk Railroad") was built, T. M. Brown who was a member of the first Board of Directors, used his influence to have the station named Mahomet after the post office instead of Middletown. He afterwards laid out the "Town of Mahomet" between the old depot and the old town, and later the name of the township was changed to that of Mahomet. His reasons for desiring the change were that it was a short name, easily spelled and written and not common (there is no other river, mountain, lake or town in the world by the name of Mahomet), and it was a nuisance to have two different names for the town and post office.

The old Champaign County History states "The name was changed from Middletown to Mahomet in 1871. Then next year, 1872, Mahomet became an incorporated village.

Geologists tell us we are located in what is known as "Mahomet Valley," so called because down 1600-1800 feet no strata of underlying rock has been found. When some drilling for oil was done they found quick sand over one hundred feet in depth, and several hundred feet below a lake of fresh water, seventy-five feet deep.

The following information was taken from an old atlas dated 1878: "In 1878, Mahomet was reported as having two flour mills, one grain station, eight stores, one graded school and three churches (Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist). Charles Parker was the first Methodist preacher; George Cooper taught the first school; H. N. Adams was the first practitioner of medicine. Mr. Porter operated the first store and was the first official postmaster.

Some of the early citizens of Mahomet were John Egbert, John Parks (originally a Whig but since the organization of the Republican Party he became a Republican), Thomas A. Davidson (father of Mary E. Scott), Stephen Abbott (postmaster and father of Laura, Byron and Abijah C. Abbott), John and Joseph Maxwell, Fielding Scott and William W. Brown (constable of Mahomet in 1856).

The first settler in Mahomet township was Jess Thompson, a squatter on government land. Isaac Busey was the first man to enter land in Mahomet township which was done at the Vandalia land office October 22, 1832. John Meade (grandfather of W. O. Dale) filed a homestead claim in 1833.

A list of some of the early settlers, the date when they came to Mahomet as well as their occupation was taken from the Atlas of 1878 and is given on the next page.

NAME.	POST OFFICE	RESID.	OCCUPATION.	NATIVITY.	CME TOC.
Abbott, S. C.	Mahomet	M'h'm't	Postmast. & Notary Public	Morris Co, N J.	1853
Abbott, Mrs. Mary E.	"	"	Wife of S. C. Abbott	Lewis Co, Ky.	1849
Bolton, Razin	"	"	Carpenter	Darke Co, O.	1858
Bolton, Mrs. Mary	"	"	Wife of R. B.	Montg. Co., O.	1847
Brown, Julius D.	"	"	Agt. I. B. & W. R R Co.	Lewitt Co, Ill.	1854
Brown, Mrs. Ida L.	"	"	Wife of J. D. B.	Champa Co Ill.	1856
Bellinger, J. A.	"	Sec. 14	Farmer & Bds Pure Blood	Champa Co N Y	1855
Bellinger, Mrs. Eleanor	"	14	Wife of J. A. B.	Champa Co Ill.	1842
Brown, W. W.	"	M'h'm't	J. P. & Gen. Col. Agent	Vermilion Co Ind	1851
Brown, Mrs. Martha	"	"	Wife of W. W. B.	Ohio	1858
Carson, Robert P.	"	"	Dealer in Coal.	Phila., Pa.	1836
Carson, Mary E.	"	"	Wife of R. P. C.	N. J.	1857
Closs, O. M.	Class & Rittenhouse.	"	{ Dry Goods, Notions,	Medina Co, O.	1865
Rittenhouse, J. S.	"	"	{ Boots Shoes Hats &c. }	Ross Co, O.	1858
Curtis, C. C. Larned &	"	"	{ Hardware, Stoves, &	Coles Co, Ill.	1870
Larned, C. G. Curtis.	"	"	{ Tinware, Farm Imp.	Vermont	1855
Clappett, S. M.	"	Sec. 36	Farmer and Stock Raiser	Blair Co, Pa.	1856
Clappett, Mrs. Frances	"	36	Wife of S. M. C.	Ohio	1856
Davis, James.	"	M'h'm't	Grocery and Restaurant	Licking Co, O.	1856
Davis, Mrs. Mary	"	"	Wife of J. D.	Fairfield Co., O.	1856
Davidson, J. W. J. W.	"	"	{ Dirs in Grain & Salt }	Madison Co., O.	1853
Davidson, F. T. Davidson & Bros.	"	"	{ Pro Mahom. Stm Mill }	" " "	1853
Dedman, E. C.	"	Sec. 14	Farmer and Stock Raiser	Shelby Co, Ky.	1877
Dedman, Mrs. Alice E.	"	14	Wife of E. C. D.	Champa Co. Ill.	1853
Dale, Thomas	"	21	Farmer and Stock Raiser	Crawford Co. O.	1848
Dale, Mrs. Mary E.	"	21	Wife of T. D.	Vermilion co Ill	1855
Egbert, J. W.	"	M'h'm't	Dlr Lum., Brick, Hwre	Brown Co., O.	1856
Egbert, Mrs. E. A.	"	"	Wife of J. W. E.	Clermont Co. O.	1856
Gemel, A. J.	"	"	Drugs and Groceries	Wyandotte co O	1867
Gleason, Rev. S. F.	"	"	Minister of Bap. Church	Vermont	1852
Gleason, Mrs. S. M.	"	"	Wife of S. F. G.	Champu Co Ill.	
Geiger, G. F.	Champaign	Sec. 25	Farmer and Stock Raiser	Wurten'bg Ger.	1870
Geiger, Mrs. Mary E.	"	25	Wife of G. F. G.	Wayne Co., Mo.	1870
Housman, James W.	Mahomet	22	Farmer	Platt Co., Ill.	1859
Johnston, Richard	"	20	Farmer and Stock Raiser	Ireland	1855
Johnston, Mrs. Mary	"	20	Wife of R. J.	"	1856
Johnson, Mrs. Matilda	"	14	Farming.	Fayette Co., Ill.	1856
Johnson, James H.	Died Feb. 1870.		Late Hesh. of M. Johnson	" " "	1856
Kirtley, M. D.	Mahomet	Sec. 36	Farmer and Stock Raiser	T'pccnoe co Ind	1862
Kirtley, T. J.	"	36	" " "	Putnam co W Va	1862
Maxwell, Joseph	"	6	" " "	Monroe Co Ind.	1830
Maxwell, Mrs. Resazano	"	6	Wife of J. M.	Vigo Co., Ind.	1849
Maxwell, John	"	9	Farmer and Minister	Green Co., Tean	1830
Maxwell, Mrs. Mary J.	"	9	Wife of John Maxwell	Frederick co Va	1836
Park, John W.	"	22	Farmer and Breeder	Jefferson Co., O.	1863
Park, Mrs. Caroline	"	22	Wife of J. W. P.	Genesee co N Y.	1863
Rayburn, Mrs. N.	"	M'h'm't	Hotel N. Side Main St.	Licking Co., O.	1876
Rayburn, R. G.	"	Sec. 23	Farmer and Stock Raiser	Madison Co., C.	1853
Harrison, Wm.	"	12	" " "	Hampatre co Va	1851
Shoup, W. R.	Mahomet	M'h'm't	Teacher	Knox Co., O.	1859
Shoup, Mrs. Della J.	"	"	Wife of W. R. S.	Franklin Co., O.	1864
Scott, F. L.	"	Sec. 14	Farmer and Stock Raiser	Bourbon Co. Ky	1830
Scott, Mrs. Julia A.	"	14	Wife of F. L. S.	Hampshire co Va	1830
Ware, J. C.	"	9	Farmer and Breeder	Champa Co, O.	1853
Ware, M. A.	"	9	Wife of J. C. W.	Champa Co. Ill.	1844

R. A. Gulick wrote, "I remember the day Jim Cissne got the first selfbinder in that locality. It first operated on what is now known as the "Bob" Davis farm, was pulled by six horses and tied the grain with wire bands. In 1888, George Rising who lived one mile north of Rising Station got the first steam thresher. The engine only turned the thresher and had to be pulled by four horses from one job to another. About two years later Mr. Rising got a traction engine for the thresher."



Fred Stearns says that he remembers in the 1880's when living in Mahomet, "Livestock ran at large all over town. Cows were common on Main Street. Some farmers who lived close to town drove their cattle to town and on down to the river for water; the cattle were usually driven down what everyone called "the back street," a block north and parallel with Main Street. Mr. Adam's cow was a holstein with long horns and had a bell which was different and there were brass knobs on the end of the cow's horns. My father, John Stearns, had seventy head of hogs running everywhere in town. They always came home to eat and sleep, but many times there were fifty extra hogs to eat with Dad's."

Many early citizens of the town fought in the wars of this nation. In Riverside Cemetery there is buried a general from the War of 1812. James Q. Thomas was a veteran of the Mexican War. S. J. Purnell was a veteran of the Spanish-American War.

June 1, 1861, in the old Baptist Church building, answer was made to Abraham Lincoln's first call for 75,000 volunteers for service in the Civil War. It has been said that Mahomet, according to its population, furnished more volunteers than any other community in the state of Illinois. Sgt. T. J. Scott was wounded 13 times at the Battle of Chicamauga, 3 bullets passing through his legs and one bullet taking part of his heel away. Mr. Scott was left on the battlefield for dead. Jim Ware crawled out on the battlefield at night and found Mr. Scott sitting beside a brook bathing his wounds.

Fred Stearns sent to us a letter addressed to his father in 1866 here at Mahomet during the Civil War from a Mr. Acree which told of some of the marches they were making.

During the Civil War the stage brought the mail from Champaign, arriving about 6:00 P. M. A crowd gathered in front of the post office (located then in the brick mill) and someone read the Chicago paper aloud, giving the progress of the war.

In the Lathrop Champaign County Directory, published by Rand McNally & Company for the year of 1870, it states there were 143 dwellings in Mahomet township. In the village of Mahomet there were 148 dwellings with a population of 670. The highest wages paid to male teachers in 1870 was \$120 and female teachers \$55. The lowest pay was \$20. Corn raised: 163,260 bushels; Irish potatoes raised: 6,498 bushels; butter: 23,579 pounds.

The last of the original timber to be cut down in Mahomet was that of a thirty-acre tract joining the corporate limits of the village on the north and later known as the Dowell or Grand View Farm. In the spring of 1879 this ground was plowed and sown to wheat. Men were employed to harvest the wheat with a hand sickle and not with a scythe and cradle, and the bundles were made and tied by hand. Harvesting by hand was necessary because of the stumps.

"The business section of Mahomet was badly scorched this morning [June 6, 1902], the post office, Ford's general store, Donham's restaurant and drug store and two blacksmith shops, being destroyed." The fire was caused by the explosion of a gasoline stove. By hard work of volunteer fire fighters comprising a bucket brigade, the grocery store of B. D. Abbott, H. J. Morehouse's undertaking establishment, and the blacksmith shop were saved. Some who suffered losses were Capt. D. J. Ford (\$5000), B. F. Donham Drug Store and Restaurant (\$1500), A. E. Smith buildings occupied by drug store, restaurant, ice house, and barn (\$1100), W. H. Holzer blacksmith shop (\$700), and Charles Stidham blacksmith shop (\$800).



**Main Street in Mahomet 1910**

Weather conditions are decidedly different today from those of a century ago, as shown by reports from various sources. In February, 1830, the biggest snowfall fell in Central Illinois. It snowed constantly for four days and nights until the snow was four feet on a level while drifts were twenty to twenty-five feet high. On March 28, 1876, a big snow fell and drifted. Farmers drove to town through the fields, going over fences. This same thing was true again in March, 1914.

The coldest day of which there is any record here was on New Year's Day, 1864, reported to be forty degrees below zero. (Records of big sleets are remembered in February, 1883, and again in 1893. On May 24, 1925, a cold wave with one-eighth of an inch of ice killed all gardens and corn.

In May, 1914, after a heavy rain, the Sangamon River rose eight feet in nine hours. The heaviest rainfall at any one time, on record, happened on March 18, 1933; 5.09 inches of water fell.

Perhaps the warmest winter day of which there is any record was on November 23, 1931, when the thermometer read 72 degrees.

One of the worst wind storms or tornadoes happened in June, 1902. Originally, the farm home of Mrs. Charles S. Purnell was a full two-story dwelling but after this tornado, which took away the upper story, the house was rebuilt to a story and a half.

### **Roadways, Bridges, Etc.**

The building of the concrete sidewalk, north of the Manuel Service Station on Route 47 to the Riverside Cemetery was financed by proceeds raised from home talent shows given in Abbott's Hall in 1913-14. Citizens donated some of the labor. The steel supports upon which the concrete sidewalk is built over the creek south of the cemetery came from the second wagon bridge over the river east of Mahomet.

For many years a sidewalk commencing east of the Masonic building and ending at the brick mill was elevated above the ground. Originally, all the sidewalks in town were made of boards. Later, many of the sidewalks were made with bricks from the "Julie" D. Brown brickyard.

The old Bloomington or State Road was first an Indian trail that branched off in a northwest direction just west of the present Masonic building.

Mrs. Mae Rayburn reports that F. L. Scott in 1835 took a plow and team and ran a straight furrow to Urbana because the trail between the settlement and Urbana was so roundabout. Along the line of Scott's furrow

was formed the Bloomington road at a later date. In 1836, Isaac Busey and Jonathan Osborn were authorized to locate a state road from Urbana to Bloomington.

At the meeting of the County Commissioners in 1836 a license was granted William Osborne to keep a ferry on the Sangamon River, Osborne to pay a \$2.00 license fee. The following ferry rates were established: Ferrying one man 6¼c; one horse 6¼c; one horse wagon 25c, etc.

South of the Big Four Railroad tracks, below the Ernest Stout place, was another road which led off in a southwest direction and was known as "Lover's Lane." Wiley Davis who homesteaded and owned five hundred acres of land where W. H. Wyatt now lives, to drain the water from the road, plowed a furrow through the woods. Today, after one hundred years, this furrow is a deep ravine.

Dr. Hartrick, a practicing physician in Seymour for many years, told of a man in 1850, living near Seymour, making the trip to Champaign via Mahomet to secure a doctor. This was necessary because there were many sloughs and no bridges via the Springfield Road, and east of Bondville a man on horseback could not get through.

In 1888, Jonas Lester got a contract from the city to gravel Main Street from Ford's Corner to Geiger's Corner. Mr. Lester hauled eight loads in ten hours and received \$2.40 for man and team for ten hours of work.

In 1917, the diagonal trail was marked through Mahomet, known as the Egyptian Trail. This was the longest trail in the world, extending from Washington to Florida.

In October, 1925, Route 39 (now 150) was opened between Mahomet and Champaign.

The ford across the Sangamon River started down just about at the cross roads east of the bridge on Route 150. During high water a regular licensed ferry operated for a number of years.

The first county bridge over the Sangamon River, built with tree pilings for a foundation, was built some time during the 1850's. For many years after the bridge was built people continued to cross at the ford to soak up their wagon or buggy wheels.



**Bridge Over Sangamon River East of Mahomet**

At top, Sam Stout, below, Roscoe Lindsey

The present wagon bridge across the Sangamon, east of town, is the third upon this site. An item taken from the Sucker State of 1916 says: "The proposition for the township to borrow \$2,813 to pay for the east bridge carried at Tuesday's election. The vote was: 113 men and 47 women voted for and 25 men and 2 women voted against." (Notice the separation of men's and women's votes.)

"Bill" Johnston told of the building of the south bridge. "Richard Johnston and R. G. Rayburn were commissioners," he says, "when they built the bridge on Route 47, south of town. This was the first bridge across the Sangamon, and people strongly opposed it because they thought it would break up the township. Wilson Miller fought it bitterly. R. G. Rayburn said 'why it won't cost you the price of a pair of pants.' Wilson Miller thought it would. 'Well, have you noticed it yet in your taxes?' asked R. G. 'No,' replied Wilson. 'Well, the money has all been collected,' said R. G."

The railroad bridge over the Sangamon was first built upon pilings. Later, steel tressels were built.

Elbert Morrison states there is no positive information, but evidently at a township election held in 1871 Middletown Township bonded itself for the sum of \$50,000 for the purpose of inducing the Indiana, Bloomington, and Western Railroad Company to build its right of way, erect and maintain a depot in Mahomet. Perhaps "Billy" Holzer was the first ticket agent. The present depot was completed in 1872. This depot was originally south of the R. G. Rayburn farm and moved from that location to Mahomet.



**Early Depot at Mahomet**

Patronage of the railroad was heavy. It was reported that in one day over three hundred round-trip tickets were sold for the morning east-bound train to Champaign.

Quoting from the Sucker State in December, 1915: "There were 459 tickets sold to Champaign last Saturday for train No. 16. When the passenger coaches were filled, men and women were forced to stand in the baggage car."

Some of the agents for the "Big Four" have been Henry Shively, Tom Deacon, Russell Buckles, N. E. Reece, W. E. Spearman, Leonard Hendrickson, and the present one is a lady, M. C. Smith.



## INSTITUTIONS

For many years Sunday afternoon preaching services were held at the Pioneer School on U. S. Route 150. H. J. Morehouse was the first person to address the people there. The meetings were undenominational.

S. C. Abbott records in his autobiography (1853) the story of preaching services held in a log schoolhouse on the Bloomington road, now identified as the Brick or Salem School...The circuit rider came around once a month.

It is recorded that Mr. Harris built at his own expense a log schoolhouse which was later used as a church.

Bethel M. E. Church was built at the northwest corner of the Harris Cemetery. Mrs. Mae Rayburn writes, "Many funerals were held in the Bethel Church, and my father helped dig many graves. The local Presbyterian minister held services at the Methodist Church at Seymour and also in our North School. I was a member of the church and paid \$3.00 a year besides what I gave to the Sunday school."

### **The Bethel Missionary Baptist Church 1839-1867 The Mahomet Baptist Church 1867-1954**



Sunday, June 23, 1839—A group of Baptists from Middletown, now Mahomet, drove over to Mt. Pleasant, now Farmer City, and organized the Bethel Missionary Baptist Church, the territory reaching from 6 miles west of Mt. Pleasant to Urbana, a distance of over 30 miles.

September 1839—The Church Organization was moved to Middletown and Rev. I. D. Newell of Waynesville, Illinois was hired to preach once a month at a salary of \$40 per year.

November 1839—First authentic record of a business meeting held in the storeroom of Daniel Porter on the second Saturday of the month.

1840—The first church was constructed, a frame structure about 20'x30' in the northeast corner of the present grade school grounds.

February 1850—On the second Lord's Day, quoting from the church records, "A motion was made by John C. Robertson and seconded by F. L. Scott that there be three trustees appointed to select a piece of ground to build a Missionary Baptist Meeting House in Middletown, Illinois, Champaign County."

July 1852—It was voted at a business meeting to assess a \$2.00 poll tax against each male member and to appoint a committee to borrow the money necessary for the completion of the building.

August 1854—The church agreed to buy the property of William Pickerel for a parsonage at a cost of \$475. A regular full-time pastor was secured.

July 1855—The church adopted the following resolution at a business meeting, "Resolved that the trustees of the church be directed to have no shows or theatrical performances in the church house."

1858—The Rev. J. R. Combs was called as pastor at a salary of \$700 per annum. In October 1858, the following resolution was passed at a business meeting: "That the trustees of this church not let the church house be used for political purposes or speeches."

June 1, 1861—The church doors were thrown open for the first time except for a religious meeting. Sixty-nine men enlisted in Company I of the 125th Illinois Voluntary Infantry Regiment.

Sunday, June 11, 1865—Ordination of Rev. S. F. Gleason, who served the church as pastor for twenty years.

March 1867—The old meeting house needing repairs, a committee was appointed to ascertain the cost of a new church. Members of the committee were F. L. Scott, I. C. Abbott, and James Robertson.

April 1867—The committee reported that a church 36x52 feet built of brick would cost \$5000 and of frame \$4,000. The church voted that a building committee composed of F. L. Scott, Joseph Maxwell, and T. M. Brown be authorized to contract for a church building, 36x52 feet to be built of brick.

May, 1867—\$3130 had been subscribed. T. M. Brown donated three-fourths of an acre of ground for a church building purposes south of the graveyard. The three highest subscribers were F. L. Scott \$500, Joseph Maxwell \$400, and Thomas J. Scott \$300. The contract was let to Pittman, Stein, and Cox at \$4,300 who returned \$100 as a donation.

Summer 1867—Dedication of the present church, which at that time faced east and had a wooden steeple.

1895—The present parsonage was acquired.

1901—Contract awarded to Frank Wright to remodel the church and build a bell tower and entrance at the northwest corner of the building.

1914—The basement was dug.

1918—The original bell cracked on Armistice Day. The present bell was secured from Mahomet Presbyterian Church.

1925—The Sunday school room on the north side was added and the basement completed at a cost of \$4500.

1952—A formal incorporation of the church under the name of "Mahomet First Baptist Church."

The Bethel Missionary Church was known early in its history as a "Close Communion Church." The old records contain many instances of members being called before the Church for "Acts inconsistent with Christian Character" and in the majority of cases the members confessed and asked forgiveness which was granted. Dancing and drunkenness were the subjects of much discipline.

Pastors in recent years have included: W. L. Patton (1929-1939),



H. Q. Morton (1939-1945), C. B. Hilton (1945-1949), Peter Siemens (1949-1951), Maurice B. Denham (1951-1954), F. V. Wright (interim Pastor 1954), and the present pastor, D. J. Unruh.

### Shiloh Methodist Church



The Methodists in Pancake Point vicinity organized about 1854 with ten members. The first year, church services were held in the home of J. S. Hannah. For a time church services were held in the Lester schoolhouse which then stood one-half mile east of Pancake Point. (This schoolhouse was a log structure with home made seats and rude walls.) Later a frame school building was erected and served as a place of worship.

This Methodist organization grew and the membership felt the need of a church building. At first a site was decided upon near the present Shiloh Cemetery, but failing here, they secured the present spot which was deeded to the Church by Gabriel Bryan so long it was used as a church site. John Hubbard Funston, who came to Illinois from Ohio in 1851, did much of the carpenter work and managed and planned the entire work. The first Church was completed and dedicated July 16, 1866, by Col. Granville Moody of Ohio, brother-in-law of B. F. Harris I. This church was a single one-room building with an aisle on each side. The men and boys sat on the south side and the women and girls on the north side, while some of the Church Fathers occupied the Amen corner.

The first pastor of the first Church at Shiloh was Rev. C. Y. Hecox. This was then on the Middletown (Mahomet) Circuit. In 1870 Shiloh became a part of Newcomb Circuit, then later in 1877 changed and became a part of Fisher Circuit. Later it was known as Shiloh Charge. Again in 1925 under Rev. J. H. Singleton it was a part of the Shiloh Circuit but shortly thereafter it became and remains a separate charge.

In 1902 the second Shiloh Church was completed and dedicated on May 4. The old church had been moved east and was used as a Township Hall. The dedication sermon was preached by W. H. Wilder, who for a number of years was President of Illinois Wesleyan at Bloomington. On July 19, 1916, this church was struck by lightning and burned to the ground.

The present Shiloh Church, a beautiful brick building, erected at a cost of \$10,000, was dedicated May 13, 1917, free of debt. Bishop Anderson preached the dedicatory sermon. The brick parsonage which stands just east of the church was built in 1920.

When Rev. J. H. Singleton disposed of his tract of land to the east

and north, a small adjoining acreage, Shiloh purchased it as an addition to the church property.

### The Presbyterian Church



The Presbyterian Church was completed in Mahomet in 1858. On September 22, 1859, T. M. Brown with his wife donated Lots No. one and two by deed, "To the Trustees of the Old School Presbyterian Church and their successors in Office." Sometime after 1859, the name was changed as indicated by a mortgage executed April 26, 1882, by "The Salem Presbyterian Church of Mahomet," in the amount of \$200.

Two families influential in the building of the church were Mr. and Mrs. William Herriott who came from Kentucky in 1840, and Mr. and Mrs. John Rayburn who came from Ohio in 1853. Also prior to 1858 came the James Graham family of Hensley Township. These families affiliated at first with the church at Urbana, but in 1858 they proceeded to organize a church and erect their house of worship here in Middletown.

Services were conducted weekly from the beginning until the church was disbanded, except for a few years when the Christian denomination used their meeting house under the leadership of the Rev. Mr. McMillen. The Presbyterians ordained Rev. C. P. Graham to the ministry. We might also note that the Rev. Henry Wallace served here for awhile, he being "Uncle Henry Wallace" of "Wallace's Farmer" whose son was Secretary of Agriculture.

A difference of opinion arose in the Mahomet Presbyterian Church during the political campaign between Tilden and Hayes in 1880, and as a result of this dispute, no preaching services were held for five years. At the end of that time an evangelist revived the church, and it was active until 1912 when the congregation became too small to support a church, and members transferred to other churches in the village. J. G. Venable, pastor of the church for seven years, preached his farewell sermon on May 19, 1912.

The last public church service of the Presbyterian Church in Mahomet was held in September, 1914.

The Presbyterian Church bought the old Methodist parsonage which was later known as the Sarah Young residence. H. E. Bridges bought the Presbyterian Church building, partitioned it off, and for a number of years he and his wife lived in a portion of it.

The church bell now in the Mahomet Baptist Church tower was



**A Group of Presbyterian Ladies**

Top row, left to right: Mollie Herriott Bessie Phillippe

Third row, left to right: Hattie Black, Nelle Veneable, Lilah Clapper, Fannie Rayburn, Lloyde Phillippe

Second row, left to right: Lulu DeHart, Hannah Buckles, Rebecca Herriott, Addie Herriott, Ella Phillippe

First row, left to right: May Rayburn, Nelle Watson Buckles, Belle Snell

originally in the Presbyterian Church.

The "Little Rebel" Presbyterian Church which stood two miles east of the Oak Grove United Brethren Church for many years was very strong in its early ministry. The church was called "Little Rebel" because of so many southern sympathizers composing its membership during the Civil War. Even after the war a great furor was created when one of its members in a prayer (during Grant's administration) referred to "this rotten Republican cursed nation." This Presbyterian Church was also called "Jersey." Rev. Mr. Venable was its last pastor.

### **The United Brethren Church**

The United Brethren Church at Oak Grove was organized under the direction of Mr. Naylor and Mr. Foulk. The church building was built during the summer of 1830. Services prior to the opening of the church were held for several years in the Oak Grove schoolhouse.

### **Church of the Nazarene**

In the early part of 1927 the first revival meeting was held in one of the uptown buildings by Rev. Noah Garvin and Rev. Mamie Burton.

The church was organized August 27, 1927, with the Rev. Mamie Burton as pastor.

The first building was a small tabernacle which was moved here from Tolono and erected just north of Jahr's store.

The ground upon which the church now stands was donated to the trustees of said church by Asberry Adams, so long as used for church purposes. The present church building was completed in 1950, and dedicated September 24, 1950.



In 1952 the church purchased for a parsonage the property known as the Ford place, next to the old Ford brick home in the west part of town.

On February 1, 1951, Rev. H. K. Burton became the minister of the church.

### Cemeteries

Jesse Tompkins was the first person who died in the township and was buried on what was known as the farm of Thomas A. Davidson. (This is the Edna Herriott farm.)

Middletown Cemetery, known as the Village Cemetery, was laid off as a public burial ground in 1850. One marker in this cemetery shows that a lady was buried here when this was English territory. In this cemetery was buried the first doctor of Mahomet, Dr. Adams.

Bryant Cemetery, southeast of town, is a free public burial ground. One grave is believed to be that of an old Indian chief.

Riverside Cemetery was laid off as a public burial ground in 1854, the original owner being J. W. Pancake. On July 16, 1870, the cemetery was sold to James Davis for \$100. In 1869 a surveyor made a plat for the cemetery which was not recorded until 1883. This cemetery was sold on August 2, 1921 to Arch and Nancy Thompson and remained in their names until 1927 when Ray Bailey fell heir to it. On February 10, 1931, Ray Bailey sold the cemetery to J. L. Thompson. On September 24, 1937, the cemetery was incorporated for endowment with seven members of the Board, which board is approved by the County Judge. The cemetery has a State Charter. Ernest Moon is now President of this Corporation and they have \$12,000 loaned out to Mahomet people. The interest from this money is used to take care of this cemetery. James Smith has worked at the Riverside Cemetery off and on since he was about 12 years old but worked continuously from 1927 to 1947 at which time he was forced to give up his work because of ill health.

### Schools

The first school on the Sangamon was taught by Charles Cooper in 1835. It was a log cabin 16x18, with windows of greased paper. It was located one-half mile south of Mahomet, then Middletown. Pupils were J. R. Robertson, the Maxwells, the Scotts, the Osborns, and the Lindseys.

Bert Bailey's residence was first used as a schoolhouse and was possibly the first schoolhouse in the town of Middletown.



According to one story told, the first log schoolhouse east of Mahomet stood at or near the present east line fence of the Timber Edge farm and back from the road about two hundred feet.

The front part of the house of Mrs. Rose Adams' mother, Mrs. William Lindsey, was once used as a schoolhouse.

Several living persons recall a log school at the southeast corner of what has been called "Rayburn Corner," north of the Frank Taylor farm. Later this was torn down and a frame school built upon its site which was later moved to the site of the Union School. Later Harmony School, district 28, was built one-half mile north of U. S. Route 150. Cherry Grove School was built in 1870.

In Stewart's history of Champaign County, page 491, S. C. Abbott says: "In 1847 a frame house was built near where William Lindsey now lives, and in 1851 a two-story frame schoolhouse near where the present brick schoolhouse now stands. This schoolhouse stood near the site of the old well house on the present grade school grounds. It was later a part of the 'Vet' Lewis property, south of the grade school grounds and known as the 'Flats.' "

"When I came to Mahomet about 1895," says Mrs. Ethel Jones, "the schoolhouse used to be in the Old Flat building which has now been torn down. Then they built a four-room brick, two rooms down and two up. This was later moved and is now a part of the house where 'Nash' Smith formerly lived."

Later, the four-room brick was torn down and a new building built like the present one. They went into the building in January, 1910, and in May, the day after school closed, the building burned. The present building was built in the same place and exactly like the one that burned. Records show Myrta Morehouse employed as the teacher at \$35 a month.



**Grade School Fire 1910**

In 1914, according to the Sucker State, "Two gasoline lamps have been purchased for the high school." In 1916, "State Superintendent of Public Instruction has notified Principal C. P. Bauman that the Mahomet High School has now been given probationary recognition as a four-year

high school. The tuition rate has been raised to \$600, a sum sufficient to pay one of the teachers."

"Dad" Heavins was janitor at the grade school building from 1910 to 1936, taking out one year in 1922 to serve as janitor at the high school. The present high school building was completed in 1921. Ora Crowley was janitor at the high school building from June 19, 1923 to August 15, 1945. "Orie" was more than a janitor. He knew all of the students, and to this day knows the year of their graduation, and the members of the various graduating classes. In February, 1937, the north end of the high school was completed.



**A Grade School Room**

Front row, left to right: Marion Babb, Paul Buckles, Raye Maxwell, Sidney Smith, Virgil Hyatt, Kenneth Smoot

Second row, left to right: Myrna Daniels, June Foster, Nettie Sherman, Helen Kimble, Frances Patton, Viola Carter, Esther Beals, Rosa Siburt

Third row, left to right: C. E. Coffin, Verna Daniels, Zelda Smith, Faye Maxwell, Iva Babb, Mary Campbell, Musa Roberts, Elsie Smith, Dalene Roberts, Hazel Beals, Gertrude Todd, E. E. Garver

Fourth row, left to right: Milo Lefever, Dick Foster, Cecil Pike, ? , Ed Record, Philip McLaughlin

Fifth row, left to right: Dale Warren, Amos Beals, George Irle, Elmer Welch, ? , Howard "Casey" Jones, Willis Lindsey

Superintendent O. W. Osborne writes on the progress of Mahomet schools: "One of the biggest changes in the schools of Mahomet and Seymour communities came with reorganization to form a unit district in 1948. Many rural school districts were incorporated into a unit which comprised ninety square miles. Only Mahomet High School remained open to accommodate the graduates of the elementary schools of the unit; the three-year high school at Seymour became a grade school only. The Mahomet and Seymour Grade schools each enroll children in grades one through eight.

"With the reorganization came additional stress on vocal and instrumental music, and boys' and girls' physical education. A hot lunch program was begun in all three centers, having been started earlier at the Mahomet Grade School under the sponsorship of the P-T.A. Additional equipment and improvements have been added yearly until the kitchens are now well



equipped to serve the boys and girls. Transportation by bus of all rural children in the unit has been a natural outgrowth of unit organization.

"Within a couple of years it was realized that the Mahomet Grade School could no longer provide proper facilities nor sufficient space for the pupils in that center. Plans were formulated and a bond issue passed to build an addition to house the first five or six grades and to provide a cafeteria and community room. This building costing \$225,000 was first used in the Fall of 1952.

"Over the last six years considerable improvement in educational offerings for boys and girls have been developed which were made possible only by the co-operation of the school patrons throughout the unit. Prospects for enrollments for the Fall of 1955 are estimated to be: Mahomet High School 150-155 students; Mahomet Grade School approximately 350 pupils; Seymour Grade School about 115."

## **ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Senior Woman's Club**

The Senior Woman's Club was organized in the home of Mrs. J. O. Pearman on January 5, 1911. Mrs. J. N. Black was the first president. There were forty-two charter members and two honorary members. The membership for 1954-55 is sixty-seven, with Mrs. William Habberton as president. Mrs. William Johnson, a charter member, is Club Mother.

### **Mahomet Town and Country Club**

This group of ladies was organized under "Mahomet Junior Woman's Club" November, 1937. There were twelve charter members with Mary Dale Patton as President. In 1954-1955 the club changed its name to "Mahomet Town and Country Club." The present officers are: president, Wanda Shoemaker; first vice president, Phyllis Rayburn; second vice president, Georgia Hickie; secretary, Verna Armstrong; treasurer, Rosemary Buker; assistant secretary-treasurer, Isabelle Parnell. There are forty-eight members.

### **Mahomet Farm Bureau Unit**

The Mahomet Unit of the Farm Bureau was organized in 1914 under Farm Advisor, Charles Oathout, with M. O. Stover as Unit Director. We have no record of the number of farmers who were charter members; Frank W. Taylor and "Colonel" Phillippe are the only living ones.

In this year, 1955, there are 150 members in this Unit with Keith Clapper as Unit Director. This is one of the strongest units in the County. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday night of each month at the high school. The members and the wives are loyal to their organization both in attendance and in food preparation.

The Four-H, an organization of youth, is sponsored by the Farm and Home Bureau.

### **Mahomet Home Bureau**

The Mahomet Home Bureau Unit was organized in 1921 at a meeting held in the country home of Mrs. B. F. Rayburn, with seventeen members. Mrs. Rayburn was elected president.

The officers for 1955 are: Mrs. Fred Mohr, president; Mrs. Elmer Woodard, vice president; and Mrs. Wm. Barnes, secretary-treasurer. The present membership is thirty-six.

## **Grand Army of the Republic**

Post members of G. A. R. of 1884 were William P. Dick, Reuben M. Bell, B. F. Thomas, W. M. Horney, W. H. McCracken, James G. Watson, John P. Stucky, Thomas J. Scott, David J. Ford, S. C. Abbott, Peter Kieffer, John Lott, Samuel Hyde, M. Pugh, Richard Johnston, David Fisher, T. M. Brown, William Hubbard, Benjamin McGath, J. P. Starling, H. W. Ellis, George Warner, Joshua Smith, I. C. Abbott, Joseph Ware, George L. Beaver, W. T. Holt, G. W. Jackson, J. Culver, and E. C. Bartholow.

### **Daughters of the American Revolution**

Mrs. Elbert W. Morrison and Mrs. William Habberton have been members of the Alliance Chapter of the "Daughters of the American Revolution" for several years. Mrs. Robert Clapper, Sr. and Mrs. Charles Patton became members in 1954-1955.

In September 1952 a ceremony was conducted in the village cemetery when a "Real Daughter" marker was placed at the grave of Mrs. Elizabeth Conger Abbott, daughter of Capt. David Conger and the granddaughter of Gen. Joseph Jackson, both of whom served in the Revolutionary Army. Mrs. Elbert W. Morrison of Mahomet, a great-granddaughter of Mrs. Abbott, accepted the marker which was the first of its kind to be placed in this vicinity since few of the "real" daughters of the Revolution had ventured so far West.

### **The American Legion Post 1015**

The American Legion Post 1015, Mahomet, Illinois, was chartered in 1946 with W. Paul Jones as its first Commander.

During the first four years Post meetings were held in the City building and in Don Robert's Building. In 1950 ground was purchased and the Post Home was built on the north side of Main street adjacent to the Masonic building.

Past Commanders of the Post, up to the time of this publication, are W. Paul Jones, Victor Wood, Fred Grindley, Wendell Phillippe, and Everett Wood. Harold Hickie is the present Commander, and the membership totals 109, an all-time high in the history of the Post.

Since being chartered, the membership has been active in civic affairs and in promoting the basic programs of the National Organization, namely, Americanism, Child Welfare, Rehabilitation, and Civil Defense.

### **The American Legion Auxiliary of Post 1015**

The Auxiliary of Post 1015 was chartered in May, 1947 with 14 charter members and Opal Wood as its president.

The Unit has actively supported the Legion Post in all of its programs.

Past Presidents of the Unit are Opal Wood, Mary Patton, Hilda Kimble, Geraldine Hickie, Sylvia Swartz, and Dorothea Scott. Thelma Parrett is the president at the time of this publication, and the membership of the Unit is 56, which is an all-time high.

### **Masonic Lodge**

Mahomet Lodge A. F. & A. M. No. 220 was granted a charter from the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of the State of Illinois on October 7, 1856. The first officers were: Worshipful Master, P. M. Parks; Senior Warden, William Stewart; Junior Warden, William Walters.

The dispensation for this lodge was granted January 23, 1856 by W. B.

Herrick, then Grand Master of Illinois, to open a lodge of Masons at Middletown, Champaign County, Illinois, to be known as "Mahomet Lodge, U. D."

The Masonic Lodge first met in the old Union Hall, located on what is now the grade school yard. The old Masonic building situated on Lot. No. 38 was dedicated January 1, 1876 and cost \$1400. The new building, a two-story one, located on the same site was dedicated in 1949.

The present officers are: Worshipful Master, Raymond Primmer; Senior Warden, Virgil Watts; Junior Warden, Dean Holderfield.

### **Eastern Star**

Mecca Chapter, No. 901, Order of the Eastern Star was instituted at Mahomet on October 2, 1923. There were thirty-three charter members. The membership on April 1, 1955 was one hundred and thirty. Mrs. Myrta Dale was the first Worthy Matron, and Charles Patton the first Worthy Patron. The 1955 Worthy Matron is Mrs. Betty Moon and Worthy Patron is Harold Moon. Mrs. Nelle Morrison was the only Grand Lecturer from Mecca Chapter, and served this Chapter for fifteen years. She now holds the title of Grand Lecturer Emeritus.

### **I. O. O. F.**

The Pacific encampment No. 126, I. O. O. F. dates its existence back to 1871. The charter members were James R. Robertson, H. S. Ore, Washington Nebeker, Samuel Steed, Lafayette Savage, E. B. Smith and John Beers.

The meetings were originally held in the Union Hall which was located at that time on what is now the grade school grounds. This building burned down in May, 1876 and the encampment suffered greatly, losing all of their vestments, etc.

In 1892 the Pacific encampment No. 529, I. O. O. F. was formed. The present officers are: Noble Grand, George Brown; Vice Grand, Jim Hicks; Secretary, George Lewis; and Treasurer, George Wills.

### **Rebekah Lodge**

The Rebekah Lodge No. 417 was formed November 8, 1895. The first Noble Grand was Mrs. Jim Lott and Florence Pinkston was Vice Grand.

Charter members still living are Jerry Johnston, Will and Fanny Johnston, Lola Wiles, and Anna Purnell.

The present officers are: Noble Grand, Mrs. Rosa Hise; Vice Grand, Mrs. Bessie Keller; Recording Secretary, Mrs. Faye Carl; Financial Secretary, Mrs. Effie Gossard, and Treasurer, Mrs. Maude Keene.

### **Mahomet Community Boosters Club**

A group of thirty-three men were invited as the guests of Clyde Taylor, at that time distributor of Dairy Products in Mahomet, to a dinner held in the Mahomet Cafe, October 11, 1951. This was the organizational meeting of the Boosters Club. J. E. Campbell was elected the first president, succeeded by J. M. Dowell, J. F. Parker, and now the president is Robert D. Graham, Jr.

Some activities sponsored by the Club have been Spring Cleanup, the Summer Recreation Program, the Corn Belt Fire Protection District and their latest project involves an attempt to organize a bank in Mahomet. There have been over ninety men as members. The meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month.

## Boy Scouts

We have no records of the first Boy Scouts organization in Mahomet but we do know there was a Lone Troop in 1912, the members being Harold Sloan, George Miller, Jr., Joe Miller, Vivian Lindsey, Nathan Black, Bryan Stevens, and Ray Bailey with Chet Morehouse acting as leader.

Records kept show the first Scout Troop, organized May, 1931, was sponsored by the Mothers' Club of the Grade School. Leaders of the Scouts were: H. R. Sparks, Scoutmaster; Rex Davis, Assistant Scoutmaster; Troop Committee, Charles Patton, C. W. Pugh, Ernest Stout, F. L. Kroner, and A. L. Blair. Twenty-two boys were registered. Troop 25 is now sponsored by the Methodist Mens Organization with seven adults and twenty boys.

The Cub Pack was first organized November 30, 1947, sponsored by the Mahomet Parent-Teachers Association. The Institutional Representative was R. Raymond Primmer; Chairman, Herbert Q. Cade; Pack Committee, Paul E. Miller and Harvey K. Gaither; Cubmaster, Ray Budde; Den Mothers, Hazel Gaither, June Cade, Evelyn N. Miller, Fay R. Fisher, and Iona Ruth Miller. There were nine boys registered. Pack 25, now sponsored by the P-T. A., have twelve adults and twenty-four boys.

A Boy Scout cabin was erected on the banks of the Sangamon in 1932. The spot chosen for this cabin was that one which had been the original site of Mahomet in 1832—near the water mill, across the road from the original post office, not too far from the "Seven Gal" Tavern and at almost the same place where the old settlers left the timber road to ford the river—some one hundred yards north of Route 150.

The inside measurements of the Boy Scout cabin were 20x24; the logs were all white oak which were cut from the Asa S. Chapman timber. Charles Patton, Boy Scout Commissioner at that time, donated all of the sawed lumber, windows and doors. The cabin was the handiwork of Mr. Patton and fifty community-spirited Mahomet men who volunteered their services. At the Mahomet Fall Festival in 1932 (when Mahomet was celebrating its Centennial) an antique and Indian relic exhibition was held in this cabin. The cabin was later moved to the Lake of the Woods and is still being used by the Boy Scouts.

## Mahomet Girl Scouts

Comparable to, but a different organization from the Girl Scouts was the Camp Fire Girls. We have no record on this organization but we do know that it was an active one about 1915. A picture was seen of these Camp Fire Girls when Martha Pike was their leader—all seated on their horses in front of the Baptist Church.

(SS)—Camp Fire Girls had a farewell for Mildred and Elmer Strevey who will leave for Chelan, Washington.

A lone troop of the Girl Scouts was organized in 1944—Mahomet Intermediate Girl Scout Troop 1. This Troop was sponsored by the Junior Woman's Club with Lois Foltz as the leader and eight registered members. In 1951 Mahomet's Troop became a part of the Champaign Area Girl Scout Council.

In 1951 a Fourth Grade Brownie Troop was organized under the leadership of Shirley Briere but disbanded at the end of the year. In 1954 and 1955 a Second Grade Brownie Scout Troop has been active under the leadership of Laverne Cooke and Vera Oliger.

A Senior Scout Patrol including Frances Busch, Charlotte Honn, Dianne Pasley, and Janet Roberts, all girls with five years scouting experience, was formed in 1954 with Frances Busch as the leader.

## ACTIVITIES

"I well remember when Blaine ran for President of the United States," wrote Fred Stearns. "Mahomet had a parade. Everyone carried a torch. The parade started at Ford's store which was headquarters for the Republicans. Byron Abbott usually got excited on such occasions, and his demonstrations were at times very funny and to the point. He was showing the boys how to fire cannon firecrackers when one touched off and blew off his thumb."

Fourth of July celebrations were often held in Carson's Woods, west of Guy Warner's present place of business. July 4, 1895, was such an outstanding celebration that Mrs. Charles Purnell says her father, R. G. Rayburn, did not even go home in the evening to do his chores.

The account of this celebration which was given under date of July 5, in the home town paper reads—"Big Celebration—one of the best crowds ever assembled. Four thousand people took part in the great event. July 4th is past but Mahomet's big celebration will be remembered for years as the best in the history of the township... The grove where the celebration was held is one of the prettiest in Champaign or any other County and was right on the banks of the river... [This grove south of town, owned by J. W. Parks was located on the south side of the Sangamon—the Harry Boyer land today.] Miss Bessie Herriott was the goddess of liberty and attracted considerable attention."



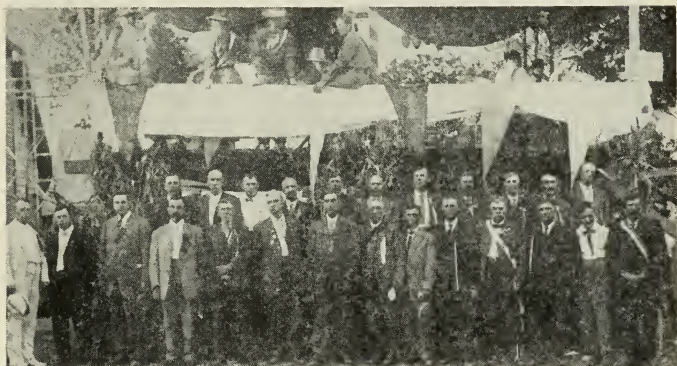
**Corn Carnival 1910**

Persons foremost in the picture, and to the right are Mrs. Philip Mohr and son, Carl, William Rayburn, Wiley Davis, and Francis Caldwell

For many years Mahomet held a carnival and street fair in September, lasting from one to three days. Prize winners at one of these included: Boy's riding contest, Rex Davis; kiddie car, Harold Truitt; coaster wagon, Franklin Daniels; boy's foot race, Ralph Castor; girl's foot race, Myrna Daniels; women's ball throwing contest, Mrs. Wyatt; men's ball throwing contest, C. C. Thurston; oldest person present, J. Q. Thomas; cookie eating contest, Keith Bryan; bicycle race, James Campbell; nail driving contest, Mrs. Fred Taylor; sugar cookies, Audie Lindsey; white bread, Mrs. Len



Rayburn; mixed pickle, Mrs. Cecil Pittman; peaches, Elmer Hawkins; apples, C. A. Fogel; white potatoes, Robert Truitt; peanuts, Douglas Parnell.



**Men at Carnival in 1910**

Front row, left to right: T. C. Wilson, R. F. Daniels, Bill Hayward, John Hayward, John Dickson, H. J. Morehouse, Robert Truitt, J. C. W. Pittman, Charles Dickson, Douglas Parnell, W. Q. Hood, Fred Barber, W. H. Holzer, James Young

Back row, left to right: Frank Bryan, George Sackriter, John Ruhl, C. B. Hoit, Ed Sloan, M. O. Stover, Ed Lucas, Dudley Herriott, Will Yancey, William Wykle, I. T. Bridges, ?



**Popular Mahomet Band**

Front row, left to right: Ernest Quayle, Jerry Johnston, Ernest Stout, William "Fid" Connor, Fred Quayle, Harry Quayle

Middle row, left to right: Tom Barker, Charles "Coxey" Carson, Nash "Brigady" Smith, Ed Lewis, "Stub" Carr

Top row, left to right: William Adams, Harry "Hap" Metters, Arthur Armstrong, Elmer Miller, Frank Barber, Henry "Hiney" Voss

An article in a newspaper in 1900 states: "Saturday an all-day and evening picnic will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. C. W. Pittman, west of town, and an effort is being made to make it a complete success in every way. Mr. and Mrs. Pittman have a reputation as royal entertainers and will leave nothing undone to take care of all who come."

This probably marked the beginning of what was later referred to as the "Farmers' Picnic," held each year in the Pittman Grove one and a half miles west of town. The picnic was always held in September, and people for miles around attended with their baskets of food. (These were still being held as late as 1921.) A good program was planned for the afternoon when everyone assembled in the shade to sit on the "comfortable" plank seats. One attraction was the baseball game. How well we remember the big tank of water and the tin cup hanging by its side!



**Hood Dinner Table**

Another summer attraction in Mahomet was the Chautauqua which was held in a big tent on the south lawn of the grade school. Afternoon and evening programs were held for about a week, with much outstanding musical and literary talent coming from all over the country. The "water fountain" for the Chautauqua was the same as at the Farmers' Picnic, a big open tank of water and a tin cup.

In 1932, Mahomet celebrated its centennial. There was a parade with oxen. Robert Truitt and Lon Jones, Sr. rode horses, decorated for the occasion. Albert "Slim" Jones took the part of "Abe" Lincoln. It is to be noted that Mahomet was established years before many other towns in central Illinois who are currently holding their centennial celebrations.

### **EARLY RESIDENCES**

Between 1836-54, the nearest thing to a settlement was Benjamin F. Harris' Home Place. Mr. Harris bought and homesteaded all of that southwest part of Mahomet township, consisting of more than 2000 acres of land. County histories record that Peter Cartwright and Abraham Lincoln were often visitors in the Harris home.

On Lots 25-27 there was built in 1876 by James Davidson a two-story frame residence, later known as the Silas Purnell home. (This is west of the grade school yard.) At one time it was known as the finest residence in Mahomet; in it was the only bathroom in the town. The inside of the tub was all copper, and the cabinet which enclosed it was solid walnut. The house was purchased by B. F. Rayburn and moved to his property where he lives today. (This copper tub is still in Mr. Rayburn's possession.)

Mrs. Eleanor Scott Bellinger was born in the house on her father's farm (where James Kroner now lives). Fielding L. Scott, father of Mrs. Bellinger, homesteaded this land in 1836.

Byron Abbott came back from the Civil War wounded. Fearing his inability to care for and support his family he bought land extending from



**Octogenarians Photographed in 1939**

Front row, left to right: Frank Stout, John Abbott, Albert Wright, David Caldwell, Sylvester F. Lewis, Jacob Pittman

Back row, left to right: Allen G. Foster, Doctor J. O. Pearman, Thomas Quayle, James W. Herriott, Henry F. Dickerson

the Lillie Thomas home on through to what is known as "Abbott Row." In this addition, Mr. Abbott planted a large orchard believing he would be able to make a living from the sale of his fruit. Originally, these seven houses were all built alike and were painted red. These four-room dwellings were first rented at five dollars a month.

One of the oldest houses in this community is the one now located on the farm of Mrs. Charles Purnell, built in 1861. It was at this farm that John Rayburn settled when he came in a covered wagon from Ohio in 1853. Originally there was built a log house and soon after the lumber was cut from the nearby timbers and the present house was built, a two-story structure (and as previously told the top story was blown off in the tornado of 1902).

When Mrs. Purnell was a child she would go with her brothers and sisters (from their homeplace across the field) to this old house which was at that time being used for the storage of grain and in play the children would tell each other, "Old Caleb" (a familiar tramp in the area) "will get you." Several years later "Old Caleb" told Mr. Rayburn that once when the children had been playing at the house he had actually been in the upstairs at the time. How frightened these children would have been had he appeared on the scene!

Mr. Purnell said that as a child he would close his eyes when driving by this place for fear the house (so tall and situated on a hill) would fall over on him. Little did Mr. and Mrs. Purnell realize that later the same frame house with its oak beams and sills would be remodeled and serve as their home for thirty years.

Mrs. Ida Grindley said this Rayburn house was always referred to as the "Weaning House" for as each child got married he would first settle here with his new wife and would live here until he could more or less get on his feet and move to a better location. Mrs. Grindley said her mother

would visit here and they could go out from the door upstairs, on to the portico, and pick cherries from the large tree which grew nearby.

### **Supervisors**

The following men were supervisors of Middletown Township: 1861, H. L. Wilson; 1862-63, B. F. Harris; 1864-65, Washington Nebeker. Supervisors in more recent years have been John Hayward, M. A. "Colonel" Phillippe, and Frank W. Taylor.

### **Mahomet Fire Department**

Mahomet's first fire wagon was a two-wheel chemical cart purchased in 1917. The cart had two 50-gallon chemical tanks which used soda and acid. Later, the chemical cart was mounted on an old Model T Ford truck. In 1938-39 the village water system was built and in February 1940 the village purchased 800 feet of 2½-inch and 200 feet of 1½-inch fire hose. Funds for the purchase of the hose were, on the whole, raised by dances in Don Robert's Building on Main Street. James Campbell and Guy Warner devoted much time and work to the project. Don Roberts gave the village a very low rate for the use of his building.

In 1946 a used fire truck was purchased from the City of Clinton, Illinois, with a pumper and booster tank. Later this pumper was discarded and a new one was purchased from the U. S. Government army surplus.

A volunteer fire department was organized in August 1944. Vic Wood was the first fire chief until he was called into service; then Harold Moon took his place. A. O. Jahr has always been the Assistant Chief. At this time 21 volunteer firemen were appointed by the Village Board.

Donald Dawkins was appointed Fire Chief in 1952 and in July 1953 was appointed Chief of the new Corn Belt Fire Protection District with A. O. Jahr as Assistant Chief. One new fire truck was purchased in December 1953 which consisted of one 500-gallon pumper per 100 feet of 2½-inch hose and 400 feet of 1½-inch hose and carries 500 gallons of water. Also one 1000-gallon tank wagon with auxiliary pump mounted on the rear. The Mahomet Fire Department now has two pumper trucks and one 1000-gallon tank wagon. Since the new department was organized, the law requires the department to carry 28 firemen.

The money for the siren installed on the water tower was obtained through donations from citizens of the town.

Some residents recall the time Amos Beals took the old fire truck around the Post Office corner too fast (on the way to John Hayward's house fire). The truck upset. The house burned down.

### **Humorous or Unusual Incidents**

A log cabin stood on what is today the "Andy" Mitchell farm. J. H. Hayward lived there, and James H. Johnson, grandfather of Mrs. Merle Hayward Clapper, died February 8, 1870. This was during the time of a very deep snow, and the roads were impassable. The body was carried down across the fields south to the railroad tracks, a train was flagged, and the body taken into Champaign for burial.

The calaboose (jail) stood north of the City Building. Some can remember on Hallowe'en when a wagon was set astride its roof. Others recall when a certain young man was locked in the calaboose, and B. F. Rayburn was the guard. Mr. Rayburn, deciding that all was under control, left about 4:00 A. M. to go home and to bed. Next morning it was discovered that the young man had escaped but had tied Mayor "Jim" Herriott's calf



in the calaboose to take his place.

One Hallowe'en night the boys were taking old Man Geiger's little house (Mr. Geiger was the Town Mayor) down to the Sangamon, not realizing that Mr. Geiger was sitting inside and had been awaiting their arrival. Mr. Geiger let them huff and puff and carry the building clear down to the Sangamon River and then he opened the door, stepped out with his gun and says—"Goosh, by Golley, you take this right back and put it where you got it." And they did! (This was one of Charley Williamson's stories.)

Elbert Morrison found in Major Welcheimer's docket, when Mr. Welcheimer was Justice of the Peace that a suit for a debt of \$1.60 was brought against Wiley Davis. Mr. Davis lost the suit. The costs amounted to more than the amount of the debt.



## BUSINESS HOUSES OF MAHOMET

**A**BBOTT'S HALL. This recreation hall stood on Lot No. 29. Originally, it was to be paid for by public subscription. The amount of money raised being insufficient, the building was completed by S. C. Abbott in 1882, at a cost of \$800. For over forty years Abbott's Hall was the center of the social life for Mahomet village and township. Elections, church dinners, medicine and home talent shows, the literary society meetings, roller skating and dances, were held in Abbott's Hall. Later, a motion picture machine was installed and operated by Elmer Hawkins. High School Commencement Exercises were held there 1887-1900 and again from 1909-1914. For the last few years of Abbott Hall's existence, it was used as J. C. McNeill's Garage and Repair Shop. Finally, it was condemned by the State Fire Marshall.



**Basketball Team**

Left to right: Frank Barber, Calvin Rayburn, Frank Rayburn, Robert Clapper, Sr., Fred Lindsey

Mrs. Charles Purnell has a copy of the play book, "The Deacon's Second Wife." The characters were: Audie Lindsey, Roscoe Smith, Stanley Smith, Gladys Bramhall, Hazel Stout, Estelle Pugh, M. E. Smith, Elsie Black, Zuma Gilbert, M. O. Stover, Charles Purnell, and Roy Primmer.

Fred Stearns writes "when roller skating was very popular, 'Waxy' Pike and 'Tot' Carson were the best skaters; we ordinary skaters tried to jump over barrels and play whip cracker with the beginners."

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The picture shown here was taken of the play cast when the proceeds were used for building the sidewalk from the business district to Riverside Cemetery. The characters from left to right are: H. B. Hazen, Ruby Lindsey, Fred Kroner, Esta Rayburn, Belle Snell, Fred Snell, Zuma Gilbert, Elsie Black, Fred Voss. Seated is Katie Wiggins.



## BAKERIES

The bakeries of Mahomet were located where Mrs. Florence Gilbert now lives. 1914 (SS) "Six loaves of bread for 25c at Caldwell's Home Bakery." 1916 (SS) "D. O. Caldwell, the local baker, has used fifty sacks of flour per month this summer." Lindsey's also operated a bakery for several years on this same corner. The Ladies Aid treasurer's book shows purchase of bread from Lindsey's Bakery in the years 1924, 1925, and 1926.

## BANKS

**The Mahomet Bank.** November 3, 1892, George McClure opened a bank at Mahomet just north of the B. D. Abbott store building. McClure had built and moved to what was later referred to as the Mahomet State Bank building in 1897. This was a private bank but his father had land worth more than the Capital Stock. In 1902, Jim Busey came to Mahomet to learn about the banking business under C. A. Pricer who was at that time Superintendent of Schools. On July 1, 1904, McClure sold to James Busey who commuted from Champaign on what was known as "The Plug." On February 17, 1929, the bank was closed and the assets and liabilities were taken over by the First National Bank of Champaign. E. W. Morrison, as School Treasurer, drew a check for \$17,875 which closed the bank.

**Mahomet Farmer's Bank, also known as the Home Bank,** In 1903, the Home Bank was incorporated and opened just north of the B. D. Abbott store, but in a few months it was moved to the building just south of the Post Office. This bank was often referred to as the Vennum Bank. The officers were: R. G. Rayburn, President; J. N. Black, Cashier; later George Marsh became Cashier and W. O. Dale became Vice President. When J. N. Black



left the bank, his stock was sold to I. T. Bridges.

The Home Bank was later known as the Farmer's State Bank. On February 26, 1922, at the death of R. G. Rayburn, Mart Busey was appointed as administrator of the Rayburn Estate, at which time he withdrew \$17,000 and deposited in his own bank—the Mahomet State. Almost immediately the bank, although not forced to close, did close because they felt they could not make money on \$65,000. The safe from this bank is now in the Patton Lumber Company.

1912 (SS). "B. F. Rayburn is acting as cashier at the Home Bank."

1916 (SS). "Irene Ford is now employed as bookkeeper at the Home Bank."

## BARBER AND BEAUTY SHOPS

The following article was taken from the Sucker State July 5, 1895, a reprint from the Daily Pantagraph: "A man of Mahomet writes the Attorney General of Springfield stating that he has a wheel of fortune which he calls 'The Fairest Wheel' but having no blanks states that every time a person drops a nickel in the wheel he receives a cigar and sometimes two. He asked if his wheel comes under the anti-slot machine law. Assistant Attorney General Newell rendered an opinion that the wheel comes under the law and would be liable as a gambling device. The 'Fairest Wheel' referred to is the property of J. W. Herriott, Jr. who has been running the wheel for several weeks.

"He also rendered an opinion that barber shops conducted in country stores with other merchandise must remain closed Sunday; that is, the barber shop portion of the store. Mr. Herriott has always kept his barber shop closed on Sunday so the above decision does not refer to him."

1927 (SS). "The Herriott and Pike Barber Shop which has been located in the Belle Bryan building for many years will move the first of the month to the building formerly occupied by the Farmer's State Bank."

July, 1936 (SS). "J. W. Herriott who has worked at the barber trade here in Mahomet more than 48 years expects to retire next month." During this time he did barber work for six generations of the James Davis family.

It is believed that Martha Pike opened up the first Beauty Shop in Mahomet; this shop was in her home.

**Charmaine's Beauty Salon** has been operated by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Bennett since 1951 in the building opposite the Legion Hall.

The **Dawkins Beauty Shop** is owned and operated by Gladys Manuel Dawkins and has been in operation since March 17, 1942. Gladys has the shop in her home.

## BLACKSMITH SHOPS

Less than fifty years ago Mahomet had three blacksmith shops, all doing a good business. The blacksmith shop (a two-story building) which stood on Main Street where the fire equipment is kept, was originally owned by Hubbard and Stearns. Later, John Stearns bought out Hubbard. At the same time, H. E. Cowan owned a blacksmith shop across the street.

In 1909 Connor and Harrah had the blacksmith shop. Later this same shop was run by Lawrence and Kelley. William Myers owned a blacksmith shop where the Sucker State office now stands.

In recent years, James W. Hicks operated a blacksmith shop where the fire equipment is now kept.



This picture shows the Blacksmith Shop. In the background can be seen Abbott's Hall.



### **BRICK YARDS, CONCRETE PRODUCTS, GRAVEL PITS**

Possibly the first brick yard was opened in 1863 by Alanson Tucker and stood east of the village limits and very near the present barn on the old Frank Knox or Benjamin McGath place, now owned by Verne Ray.

Prior to 1870, there was a brick yard on the Calvin Rayburn place. Brick made at this yard were used by John Dale in building the residence known as the Shively farm, and Thomas Dale in 1871 obtained brick from this same yard to build his farm house, now the residence of Estal Hillman.

There is knowledge of a brick yard having been operated upon the site of the Irle residence, just south of the Methodist Church. The clay used at this kiln was obtained where the Methodist parsonage and garden are now located. Over sixty years ago, it is remembered that a pond existed at this place, which the boys and girls used for ice skating.

The John Egbert Brick Yard was located just west of Mahomet, near the railroad. The clay was obtained on the premises now owned and occupied by Mrs. Albert Anderson. The George Sackriter Brick Yard was situated south of the railroad tracks. Washington Nebeker had a tile yard on his home place which is known to many as the old Dick place.

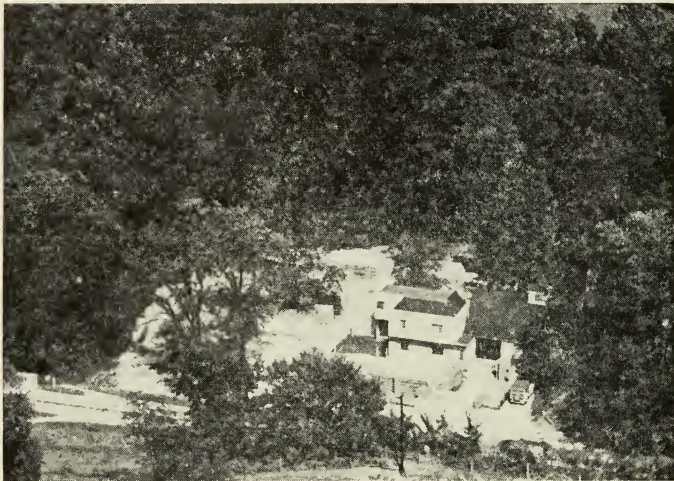
Julius D. Brown had a brick yard located near the Bert Warner home, one-fourth mile west of Mahomet on U. S. Highway 150. The Warner and Morehouse Tile Yard in 1886 was in Abbott's Addition. As late as 1875, a brick yard was owned and operated by Rezin Boltin west of the Jonas Lester gravel pit on the banks of the Sangamon River. M. J. Dunning owned and operated a tile yard for several years near the Jonas Lester gravel pit.

### **Mitchell Concrete Products**

Mitchell Concrete Products, Incorporated, was organized July 1, 1947, for the manufacture and sale, at wholesale and retail, of concrete block, brick, chimney block, and allied lines. The incorporators were Robert D.

Mitchell, Roy Mitchell, and Louise M. Mitchell. Land was cleared and modern manufacturing facilities were erected on a site immediately south-east of the bridge, one-half mile south of Mahomet on Route 47, taking advantage of a natural two-level location which facilitated materials handling. The company manufactures a full line of masonry units in both natural and light-weight aggregates.

Below is pictured Mitchell Concrete Products.



There have been and are now several gravel pits around Mahomet. Someone remarked that the old Sangamon River seems to have been good for something.

Southwest of Mahomet is the **Mahomet Sand and Gravel, Inc.**

#### **W. H. Troike Co.**

Another gravel pit southwest of Mahomet is the W. H. Troike Company. The gravel pit on the C. I. Pfister farm was originally opened up in 1940 by I. A. Sanders and his brothers who shoveled the gravel into their trucks by hand. In May 1941, W. H. Troike put a dragline crane in the pit to strip the dirt off and to load trucks. The gravel pit filled a growing demand in and around Mahomet for gravel for surfacing roads, for building homes, etc.

In 1946, C. R. Plankenhorn joined the business. In 1947 a washing plant was installed to wash and classify the sand and gravel. This new equipment gave the customers a better product, and a complete line of sand and gravel for their building requirements.

In 1949 a second and larger plant was installed and in 1950 the original plant was rebuilt and improved, as the two plants were necessary to keep up with the demand for materials.

Not only has the W. H. Troike Company furnished Mahomet and surrounding territory with convenient, quality building materials, but many

local people make their living by trucking sand and gravel from this local industry.

### **Gibson Bros. Construction Company**

Ernest H. and Marvin Gibson, partners, first opened up the gravel pit on the Mabel McDaniels property about eighteen years ago. After processing gravel here for several years they moved from this location to the Frank Stout land and later to the Lisle Lester property where they are now.

The Gibson Brothers not only process the gravel, making what we know as crushed rock which is used for roads and drives, but they also do excavating and drainage work. This company has provided gravel for many of the township roads.

### **BUGGY AND HARNESS SHOPS**

At the time that the Mahomet Bank was built the building which adjoins it on the west was built by Frank Bryan for his buggy and harness trade. 1912 (SS). F. E. Bryan sold three sets of double-driving harness last week. 1913 (SS). F. E. Bryan received his second car of buggies Monday. The buggy business seems almost as strong as last year. 1916 (SS). F. E. Bryan has installed a new harness machine. With it he is able to sew automobile tires whereby he can make one tire out of two old ones. 1917 (SS). F. E. Bryan's harness and buggy business is being sold out by Glenn Bryan who has managed the business since the death of his father.

### **CONTRACTORS AND CONSTRUCTION WORKERS**

"Colonel" Phillippe and Sons, Contractors. When Mr. and Mrs. Phillippe started housekeeping, in the house where John Cooke now lives by the bridge on Route 150, in 1900, there was just one house on the west side of what we know as "Silk Stocking Row" and that was Byron Abbott's house where Mrs. Gertrude Herriott lives today. "Colonel" and his helpers have completely built five of the houses on this street and "Colonel" has helped in either the building or remodeling of all the other houses except that of Guy Warner's. Around 1911 Mr. Phillippe was the contractor for the Bryan house where Len Rayburn now lives, the cost of this house at that time being \$4200; the Ray McClughen house (formerly the Pearman home) which cost \$3800; the Ousley Keene house at a cost of \$3500; the house of Mrs. Mary Herriott; and the one of Walter Breternitz. Other houses built between 1900 and 1918 by "Colonel" were those of Sarah Jahr, Maude Herriott, Mrs. Sam Cooke, F. L. Kroner, Elbert Morrison (then the Morehouse property), Besse Miller (then the John Ruhl property), and many others.

In 1918 Mr. Phillippe moved back to the farm where he lived until 1940 when they retired—back to the "Metropolis" of Mahomet—and back to housebuilding. Some of the recent houses built have been those of Wilbur Patton, Mrs. Charles Purnell (on "Nylon Avenue," parallel to "Silk Stocking Row"), Homer Deaton, Paul Scott, Ernest Stout, Harold Roberts, Dr. Smith's office (formerly the home of Mrs. Betty Miller) and on and on the list might go. "Colonel" and his helpers have also built Jahr's Store and its new addition, the Williamson Shop, the Masonic Lodge and the American Legion Hall.

Mr. Phillippe is leaving many "Tombstones" or "Markers," in the form of houses, over the town.

Lon Jones, another older settler of Mahomet, says he came to Mahomet when he was 19 years of age, in the 1880's, and at that time there were just two houses on Route 47—one on the north side of the street by

the house where John Holloway now lives, and the other one was on the opposite side of the street.



**Building of Bryan House**  
Robert Davis and R. G. Rayburn

**Dwight Shoemaker** came to Mahomet in 1935 and has been in the Concrete Construction work for twenty years. He has been in private business for the past three years.

### **DOCTORS AND DENTISTS**

The dwelling now on Lot. No. 27, and for years known as the Buckles property, where Ashers now live, was first built as a doctor's office. The building where Bert Williams has his watch repair shop was formerly a doctor's office. Dr. John D. Gardner, Dr. John H. Gardner, and Dr. J. O. Pearman all had their offices here.

The following was taken from the "History of Champaign County": "The first physician to locate in Mahomet was Dr. N. H. Adams who opened an office there in 1843. He remained there ten or fifteen years. About 1846, Dr. C. C. Hawes came to Mahomet and continued practice there until his death in 1872. Early in the 1850's, Dr. C. L. Crane located in Mahomet where he remained until his death in 1856. Dr. J. D. Culver came about 1857 and remained in practice there until his death in 1890. Dr. John D. Gardner located and practiced medicine there during the latter part of the 1850's and in the early 1860's. His son, Dr. John H. Gardner, came to Mahomet in the early 1870's and practiced until his death in 1903."

Dr. S. W. Shurtz practiced here in the early 1900's. They lived in the brick house where Mrs. Bessie Keller now lives, and his office was located in a house which stood where the Maliskas house is now, just north of the Methodist Church. Dr. A. L. Collins was the doctor here in 1903, and his wife also practiced medicine. They too lived in the house where Mrs. Keller now lives.

Dr. C. C. Aubuchon was the town's doctor for several years, selling



his practice to Dr. C. M. Coen in 1919. Other doctors have been Dr. H. Swiser in 1860, Dr. Tom C. Wilson, and Dr. J. O. Pearman.

**Dr. R. H. Smith** began practicing in Mahomet in 1932, living at that time in the Keller house and having his office in his home. They later moved to their present home and since 1950 Dr. Smith has maintained his office across the street in what was formerly the Betty Miller house.

Dentists in Mahomet have been R. F. Daniels and **Fred L. Kroner**. Dr. Kroner, a graduate in Dentistry from Northwestern in 1919, purchased the practice in Mahomet from R. F. Daniels, at the present location, and began his practice in September of that same year. Dr. Kroner, our dentist for 31 years, had an office in Mansfield and Mahomet from 1920 to 1924 when he opened his Champaign office with Thursday afternoons in Mahomet.

### DRESSMAKERS

How many can remember the long hours spent having a dress fitted at one of these dressmakers: Mrs. James Ware, Miss Laura Stonebraker, Mrs. Arch Thompson, Mrs. Hattie Bramhall, Mrs. Josie Trinkle, Mrs. Martha Pike, Mrs. Ombra Foster, Miss Mollie Herriott, Mrs. Lou Meyers, Miss Mattie Keene, and Miss Irene Ford.

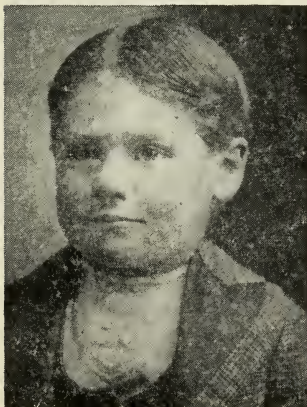
### DRUG STORES

The old Carson Store stood about due east and across the road from where the Boy Scout cabin formerly stood (northeast of the Ernest Stout place). George Lynch stated that at first his house was a store (maybe Carson's), and it also for a time housed the post office; the east room was for a time used as a saloon. This house which is now being torn down was built in the 1840's.

#### Carson's Drug Store

After the Civil War, Joseph Carson was for some time in Swannell's Drug Store, Champaign, as a clerk. Later, he opened his own store near

Ira A. Abbott's Wagon Shop here in Mahomet. In the early 1890's Joseph Carson expanded his business in this present location, handling drugs, paints, wallpaper, groceries, boots and shoes. For years the east brick building was called the Rea Building, and the west one then and now the Carson Store. Carson's Drug Store is the oldest business place in Mahomet, started in 1869. John Carson became a registered pharmacist in 1921 and since that time has operated the drug store.



**John Carson as a lad**

### DRY GOODS

On East Main Street a brick building stood on the northwest corner across from the grade school yard. Washington Nebeker owned a clothing store there. This building was later



turned into a mill. As late as the 1930's, there was still legible the sign on the front of the building which read "Deliver grain in the rear."

After the great Mahomet fire of 1872, the business houses moved west on Main Street. At this time Mr. Egbert built for Mrs. C. C. Hawes the brick buildings we see today. The picture here was taken from an old atlas, dated 1878. Gloss and Rittenhouse had one of the first dry goods businesses.



Mahomet in 1878

On the site of the Mahomet Bank building, after 1872, there was constructed by "Cap" D. J. Ford a large store building which burned in less than ten years. He then bought the ground and built a large building on the site of the brick post office building. This Ford store carried dry goods and groceries, with the post office in the far west end. 1895 (SS). "Fans for lean people, fans for fat people. Get fanned while you buy at Ford's." The building burned to the ground along with two frame buildings which adjoined on the south in 1902.

What is now Burk's house formerly stood where the post office is. Then it was moved to the site of the I. O. O. F. Building and later to its present location. The second floor was occupied by H. E. Burness, Justice of the Peace. In the rear was the paint shop of Peter Williamson.

1912 (SS). Sadie Phillippe is assisting in the Chicago Cash Store during the absence of J. N. Black who is taking his vacation.

In one of the brick buildings (east side of the present Carson Drug Store) T. H. Rea, nicknamed "Cap," sold dry goods, notions, and clothing. Mr. Rea, about 1923, sold out to Roy L. Lindsey, a competitor whose dry

goods and shoe store occupied the building where the Sucker State is now located.



**Men in Front of D. J. Ford Store**

Front row, left to right: Ed Sloan, M. O. Stover, Roy Lindsey, ? , Robert Truitt, Clarence Herriott, W. E. Vance, John Hayward, James Young, "Dad" Heavins, J. C. W. Pittman, J. D. Pittman

Back row, left to right: Jerry Johnston, I. T. Bridges, G. B. Todd

1915 (SS). "Fred Carson's exclusive shoe store is doing a good business." At this same time Sam Jones owned a dry goods, shoe, and clothing store in the I. O. O. F. building. Later, James Hicks operated a dry goods store where White's Restaurant is today.

### **FEED STORES**

The old flour mill, located on the corner northwest from the grade school, was used at one time as a produce house by Oliver Smith and Sam Beals.

On the corner where Mrs. Hazel Brackemyre now lives was a brick building where J. Buchanan operated a work shop; later Fred Snell owned a feed store there.

Victor Wood had a Feed Store on Main Street, just east of the old bank building, from 1936 to 1954, at which time he sold to Robert Alvis. Mr. Alvis also has a trucking service.

### **GARAGES**

About 1909 or 1910 Dan Smoot started to work for the J. B. Busey Sales Company. At this time "Capie" Pricer was bookkeeper for the same company. Putting gasoline in the cars then was a different procedure from now for there were no gas pumps; instead you poured it in. Later Mr. Smoot went into business for himself in this same building (which is now occupied by Warner Products). Mr. Smoot at the present time has his shop in the garage on his home property.

1919 (SS). "The Ruckman Garage is advertising free air for your automobile tires."



George Carter and J. A. Bellinger owned the first International automobile in Mahomet

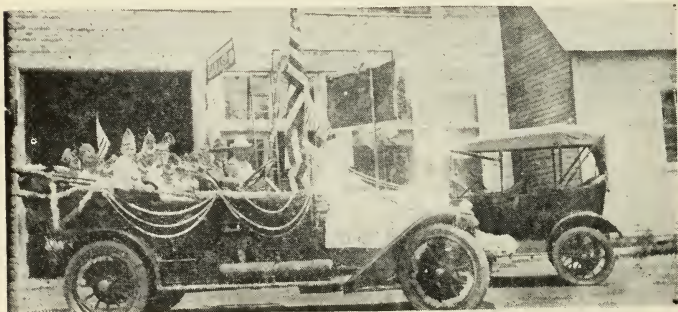
Dean Lowman owned the garage, Mahomet Motor Company. 1930 (SS). "The new Ford Roadster \$435. A stylish, sporty car as speedy as it looks. Beautiful colors and gleaming metal parts of rustless steel emphasize its graceful beauty. Its alert performance puts a new joy in motoring."

Others who have operated garages have been J. N. Black, Fred Stearns, J. C. "Jaydee" McNeill, Fred Daniels, John Holloway (from 1925-1936), Royal "Hap" Asher, and Russel Duke.

**Henry Kelley** established his own garage back of the Asher home on April 20, 1953. In 1954 he built a new garage back of his residence and has a fine garage service.

### **GASOLINE SERVICE STATIONS AND TRUCKS**

Fred Stearns sold Standard gasoline in the building formerly occupied by Dan Smoot's garage, now occupied by Guy Warner's place of business. Henry Wilson brought gasoline from Champaign in a tank wagon and drove a "foxy" team of horses. Pictured in front of his old garage is F. C. Stearns, owner, in the seven passenger Big Thomas Flyer (105 h. p., 6 cylinders—cost \$6,000). The car is decorated and the rear seat filled with children for one of Mahomet's carnivals.



**Fred Stearns in his Thomas Flyer**

Hiram Pasley sold Standard gas from a pump in front of the building where the potato chip business is now located. Later, there was a Standard oil pump and station at the old Abbott Hall, and a year or so later it was moved across the street where Charles Jackson and Jess Warner operated the business for some years. **William Golden** has run the Standard Truck since March 1, 1955.

### **Herriott's Sinclair Service**

The Sinclair Service Station was built on Route 39 (now 150 and 47) at the same time the hard road was being constructed. In October 1926 the Station was opened for business by Matt D. Herriott who managed it for twenty-five years. In November 1951 illness forced him to quit working. Matt was buried November 10, 1952—exactly one year from the date he quit work. Roger who had worked with his father on a part-time basis since 1933 and full time since 1940 is now the manager.

The first Sinclair Station consisted of one room and rest rooms and three pumps, with an outside pit and no lift. Because of the growth of business a new two-room Station was built in 1939 with the grease pit and a lift inside. Because of the school busses and larger trucks to be serviced, another room was added in 1949, making the Station a Modern Super Service.

**Myron "Gus" Hoit** has been driving the Sinclair Truck since March 1928.

Paul Grigsby has operated the Phillips Service Station "**Paul's 66 Service**" with the "Drive In" since May 1952.

**Elmer Woodard** has operated the Champaign County Service Company Truck since March 1953.

**C. F. "Dick" Rex** has driven a gasoline truck since October 20, 1923. Now who can beat that record? "Dick" had Myron drive his truck for him some and thus taught him the trade. "Dick" drives the Marathon Truck.

The **Berbaum Brothers (Henry and George)** have driven the Mobilgas Trucks since March 1942.

### **GRAIN ELEVATORS**

One of the first scales for the weighing of grain was located where the W. O. Dale residence is now.

In 1879 (according to the Abstract) Thomas Davidson was owner of the elevator. Later owners of this elevator (at different times) were J. N. Black, William Wykle, and Harley Woolsey and Company. In 1923 this elevator, The Mahomet Grain Company, became known as the Inland Grain Company with Frank Rayburn as Manager. The elevator did not change hands but the name was again changed to that of Valley Grain Company in 1928 and was sold to the Tjardes in 1936.

The Farmers Grain Company (a corporation) had as its President, Ransom Hurley with John Hayward as bookkeeper and F. E. Davis as Manager. This Company was later absorbed by the Mahomet Grain Company and the old building torn down.

### **Parker's Grain Elevator**

Historically, the local Country Grain Elevator is one of the oldest, if not the oldest of the commercial enterprises in Mahomet. It has always been in approximately its present location. Although it is now owned and



operated by one firm, it has in the past been owned by more than one and the buildings situated in more widely scattered positions.

G. C. and Harry Tjardes purchased the elevator in September 1936, during bankruptcy proceedings; they in turn sold on January 3, 1939 to the present owners, at which time the elevator had a capacity of 35,000 bushels. In 1939 an annex with capacity of 20,000 bushels was constructed. In 1949 another annex with capacity of 33,000 bushels was constructed. The need for this additional space has been brought about through the change in the marketing practices of the producers.

The present operators are happy to have been a part in the growth and service to the community entailed by their business expansion, and above all proud to have been a part of our Mahomet Methodist Church since locating in the community on June 5, 1938.

The present owners: James F. and Leona Parker

Our Slogan: "At Your Service"

Our Staff: Robert G. "Tuzz" Clapper, Jr., Manager

Ivan R. Bryan, Grain elevator houseman

Jackie Bryan, Coal man and elevator helper

## GROCERY STORES AND MEAT MARKETS

A. E. Smith owned a meat market where the telephone office now stands. Other owners in the early days were B. D. Abbott and Irvin Rising. On the lot where the Barracks family now lives was formerly a large building where Dan Rowe lived and operated a meat market.

W. H. Holzer operated a grocery-hardware store in the old Masonic building. Later, he built a brick building west of this. Mr. and Mrs. Holzer were in business in Mahomet for twenty-five years. 1915 (SS). "To end the greatest money-saving sale ever held in Mahomet, Illinois. F. L. Tanner is to use the building as Motion Picture Theatre. All stock, hardware and groceries, fixtures and all to be closed out not later than Saturday, December 4. Big bargains on stoves, churns, milk cans, lamps, gate hinges, and a large assortment of mortise locks at your own price. W. H. Holzer."

"Irv" Rising's store was sold to Fred Scott who in turn sold it to James Young. In 1915, Mr. Young moved from the Phillippe farm where he had lived for twenty-eight years and started his hardware, grocery, and furniture store. 1924 (SS). "James Young needs more room and has decided to build an addition to the south end of his store which will make the building 162x26 feet. All partitions will be removed, making it all into one room. The brick work and carpenter work will be done by G. B. Todd, Lawrence "Governor" Williams, and William Johnston."

Originally there stood a story and a half frame house where the Carter Building now stands and this house was used for a restaurant. A windmill, in front of the house, was used to pump from a large cistern which the people used for drinking water. In the picture shown elsewhere in this book of a street scene in Mahomet one can see the legs of the windmill.

Carter and Pasley operated a grocery store and meat market in the old Carter building from 1912 to 1929. Hiram remained out of the grocery business for about one year but again started in the meat market of Jim Carson's grocery store around 1930 and then later took over the store and remained in the business until his death in 1947. James Pasley continued with the grocery store for the next four years.

Owen Truitt operated "The Red Front," around 1923 but the exact length of time is unknown. Charles Thurston operated a grocery store for many years near the depot.



More recent and present grocery store owners include:

**Miller's Groceries and T-V Sales** which was started in 1951, the F. E. Millers came here from Springfield, Illinois.

**Armstrong's Grocery** which was started June 1951, the Roy Armstrongs came from Champaign.

**Charlie's Market** opened by Charles H. Sansom February 1, 1955, is located on Route 150, across from the Sinclair Station.

Brumfield's Fruit Stand.

### HARDWARE STORES

The Tanner Company of Indianapolis, dealers in hardware and steel products, observed their anniversary in 1954, and showed how invoices were formerly handwritten. A photograph of one shown was dated June 15, 1883, and was for goods shipped to J. W. Egbert, Mahomet, Illinois, for such items as tin cups, pail covers, and sheet metal.

### Jahr's True Value Hardware

F. O. Jahr received his first experience in the grocery and hardware business by working for W. H. Holzer in his general store. At the time of B. D. Abbott's death, Mr. Jahr was given first option on the purchase of his grocery store which stood on the corner across the street west from the present store. In 1903 Mr. Jahr purchased the grocery and hardware business from Conn Abbott and he remained in that location until 1910 when he erected his building at its present location. 1913 (SS). "F. O. Jahr began selling bananas by the pound on Tuesday, in place of by the dozen which has always been the custom."

In 1937 F. O. Jahr sold his business to his two sons, Frank and Albert. At this time they added meats, bottled gas and appliances to the stock. In 1943 at Frank's death, A. O. Jahr purchased the entire business which he continued to operate as a general store until 1946 when he discontinued the groceries. F. O. Jahr passed away December 24, 1949.

During the summer of 1950 a new room was added to the old building and is continuing under the name of Jahr's True Value Hardware, a straight hardware operation.

### LIVERY STABLES

Some fifty years ago there were two livery stables, and the drivers met the trains with hacks, competition running high. Jack Stucky had



**In Buggy in Front of Stucky Stable**  
Left to right: Pet Ruhl, Allie Johnston, Ethel Jones

one of the stables and Elmer Hawkins the other one. The Hawkins Stable was built in 1903. Elmer Hawkins ran it for nine years.

## **LUMBER MILLS AND YARDS**

In S. C. Abbott's autobiography, under date of 1853, mention is made that he hauled the pine lumber for his house on the Champaign-Piatt County Line from Covington, Indiana. At this same date he stated that the hardwood lumber was procured by him at the Cherry Mill north of Mahomet and also some from a mill being operated at Centerville. Soft lumber was brought up the Wabash River from the southland. There were portable saw mills which were set up and moved from time to time.

In 1869, the first lumber yard was established in Mahomet by John Egbert, very soon after the railroad came through the town. It was located where John Burk's house now is.

In 1880, William Tanner's Lumber Yard was located where Mrs. Walter Ponder lives today. Lon Spurgeon operated the lumber yard in the same place until 1910.

William Wykle owned the lumber yard for several years, and then sold it in 1920 to Charles Patton.

### **Patton Lumber Company**

The Patton Lumber Company at first consisted of two sheds. The main building, occupying the same location as the present business, was a large low building with a U-shaped driveway around which horses could pull wagons for loading. The other shed, on the south side of the tracks across from the depot, was used to house cement and steel products such as fence. Also located in this auxiliary shed was a plant for hand-making cement blocks.

The yard provided a great deal of excitement by burning down during the three-day carnival of 1926. Heavy dark smoke and debris were carried by the heat and a south breeze over the town for miles north. The present shed, which has had later additions, was built that same Fall. Nearly everyone in town who has ever wielded a hammer has told that he helped construct the new shed.

Although Mr. Patton is no longer active in the operation of the business, he is still the owner. At this time it is believed to be the oldest business operating under a continuous ownership in town. W. C. Patton is the present Manager.

## **NEWSPAPER**

### **The Sucker State**

Quoting from History of Champaign County, Vol. I, p. 493: "The Mahomet Sucker State, as the local newspaper is called, issued its first number on October 13, 1879, a few issues having been put out as "The Magnet." As "The Magnet" did not seem to draw, The Sucker State was substituted. For the past fifteen or sixteen years the paper has been owned and edited by Charles D. Warner, C. W. Murphy, C. M. Pearson, O. D. Stiles, and C. W. Pugh. During the bulk of that period it has been in charge of Messrs. Pearson and Pugh."

According to an item which appeared in the Sucker State a few years back, "The first issue of the Mahomet Sucker State appeared in January, 1878. St. Clair Brown was the editor. For the first few years of its existence, the Sucker State was printed in LeRoy, Illinois. The office was in a frame building on the site of what used to be the Mahomet State Bank building (now Armstrong Grocery). The first issues consisted of a

small 5x9 inch sheet."

A story and a half building used to stand across the alley from Mrs. Sam Beal's house. Here it was that Ed Lucas managed the paper. Where the old Jahr store was located, William Murphy was editor, in 1895. Subscription rate was \$1.00, and the paper consisted of eight pages and was issued every Saturday. Other editors have been Charles Dale and Lee Maxey. Later, the Sucker State was operated by Charles Pearson.

Charles Pugh became editor in 1913 opening his shop where Otto Furnish now lives. His wife, Estelle, became editor at the time of Mr. Pugh's death in 1950. She is assisted by her son, Joe. The present circulation is 690, and the subscription rate is \$1.50.

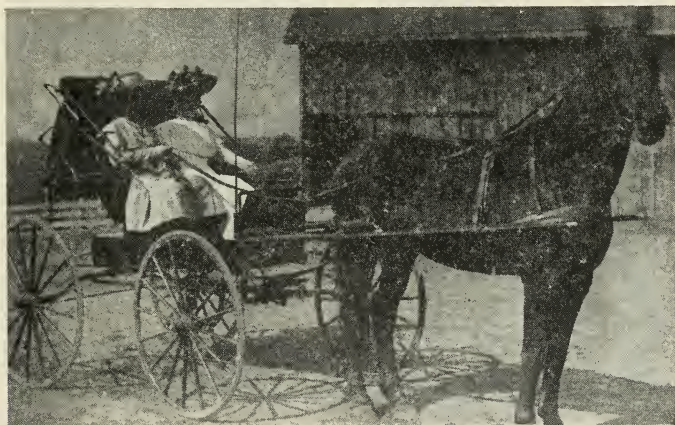
### MILLINERY SHOPS

Many people remember Mrs. "Hen" Gamel's Millinery Shop, located just east of Jahr's store, and many remember Mr. Gamel's frequent usage of "It's bean."

Sometime after 1874 Mrs. Joseph Ware managed a millinery shop. Laura Stonbraker had a millinery shop where Fred Kroner's office now is. At that time it was a story and a half frame building.

In more recent years Mrs. Zuma Gilbert had a millinery store in her home which was where Harold Moon now lives.

Besse Primmer Miller and Madge Primmer Webb are pictured below in some millinery purchased from Miss Stonebraker.



### MILLS

Many years ago a flour mill was built upon the present site of the James F. Parker Elevator, and was managed for many years by Major Welsheimer.

On the east half of Lot. No. 26 and on the corner, there was built about 1867-68 a one-story brick building which was occupied as a steam flour mill.

North and west about one hundred feet from the old Boy Scout cabin, and along the banks of the Sangamon stood many years ago the old grist mill. This mill stood about due north of the George Lynch place.

About sixty years ago a dam was built across the river, and the mill was operated by a waterwheel. We understand that this mill was also equipped with a steam boiler and engine, in the event the river in the summer months became too low to furnish power.

The first evidence we can find as to authentic records of this mill is taken from the county records in Deed Book C, page 161, dated April 25, 1848: "Charles Haptonstoll to David Canter, describing undivided one-half interest in the following real estate 'commencing S. E. corner of land deed to Amas Crosier on which the mill stands.' "

We find in Book 9, page 639 a deed recorded from Abraham Cappis and Lydia Cappis to John Hume. The description of the property conveyed makes reference to "on which the Mill stands." This deed was recorded January 27, 1868. The old mill was razed and lumber used in building the barn which until a few years ago stood on the W. O. Dale premises on Division Street.

One of the stone burrs, used for grinding grain in this mill, can be seen today in front of the Lee Carpenter (formerly R. J. Rayburn) home.

The maintenance of the dam at the Old Mill was one of hardship. It is reported that four or five dams were washed away. When John Hume was the proprietor, he built a dam using an estimated five hundred cords of wood of four-foot lengths. High waters came again. Mr. Hume called for men to help save the dam, but to no avail. The entire five hundred cords of wood were washed down the river.

### PLUMBING AND HEATING

Mr. Geiger owned the first hardware business. The doors of his store were never locked. "Boys" around town played poker in among the binders, and often left in a hurry, scared by Fred Rising when he came to do some work, and so on Monday morning Guy Williamson, on Rising's invitation, picked up the stray coins, a quarter or fifty cents now and then—big money to a school boy.

"Irv" Rising, Mr. Geiger's son-in-law, took over the business and it was then that Charles H. Williamson learned about plumbing and heating. Wood stoves sold for a dollar an inch.

#### Williamson Plumbing and Heating

C. H. Williamson and son, Guy, started their business in the old Tanner building about a block and a half south of the Sinclair Filling Station in 1914. They were located here for about one year and then moved their place of business to the building now occupied by Guy Warner's Concrete Products and stayed here for a year.

1914 (SS). "Your attention is called to C. H. Williamson and Son who have opened tin work and general repair shop over Black's Garage. Heating outfits, steam, hot water, hot air, and plumbing of all kinds." At this time they moved to the building just north of the old B. D. Abbott



Guy Williamson



store (north of the post office) where they remained until July 1929 when they moved to their present location on Main Street. C. H. Williamson remained active until approximately one year before his death in 1948.

In 1939 Wilfred entered into business with his father so we still have Williamson and Son (Guy and "Ferdie"). Wilfred has worked with his father except for the thirty-nine months when he was in the service.

In 1949 the Williamsons built the present concrete block building.

## **POST OFFICE AND POSTAL EMPLOYEES**

It has been noted that mail was received by early pioneers in a make-shift manner. When a permanent settlement had existed for some eight years, a post office was located here, designated as Mahomet. This aroused the ire of residents of the Middletown Plat, and for many years mail was continually forwarded here, addressed to Middletown, Mahomet P. O.

The Post Office was first located in the old store in what was later known as the George Lynch house.

In the early 1870's the village post office was located in the old brick mill. At one time there was a building across the street west from where Mrs. Florence Gilbert now lives, and here J. W. Pinkston served as postmaster. "Steve" Abbott was postmaster for many years.

Fred Stearns says, "Mr. Abbott would come down town and usually stop where Paul and I were near the front gate at home, and tell me my name should be Silas and then tell us a Bible story about Paul and Silas. Then later would come August Jahr. He stopped and talked a little, too."

For nearly sixty years, except for a short time when the frame building burned in 1902, then later in the 1920's for a short time, Mahomet's post office has been on the same corner where it now stands.

In 1897, Irene L. Ford was appointed postmistress, a position she held until 1914. Her sister, Estelle G. Ford, was her assistant. Later, Miss Ford was appointed postmistress in 1924, which office she held until 1934. Others serving in this capacity were Eva Carson, Madge Lindsey, Audie Lindsey, James Carson, George Brown, and Daisy Miller. Mrs. Miller has been postmistress from 1938 to 1945 and from April 1, 1948 to the present time.

Rural mail carriers have been Ed Lucas, Frank Davis, Ernest Foster, Asher Herriott, Roscoe Smith (31 years), and Ernest Stout (46 years).

Roscoe Smith who carried the mail from 1903-1934 has been in the insurance business for many years, even before he retired as rural mail carrier.

Ernest Stout, the only rural carrier from the Mahomet office today, started carrying in 1905 but was away from his job and on a farm for three years.

## **REPAIR SHOPS**

August Jahr owned a shoe repair shop in a small wooden building where Brown's Barber Shop now stands.

W. C. "Cad" Maxwell, who always whistled while he worked, owned the Shoe Repair and Harness Shop. 1918 (SS). "I now have enough oil on hand to oil fifty sets of harness at the old price of \$1.00 per set. If you want it at the old price, bring your harness in at once. I will have a man here the first of the week to assist me in getting it out quick."

## **RESTAURANTS**

A. E. Smith owned a lunch room in a frame building located where Lake's Barber Shop is today. 1895 (SS). "Fifteen different drinks at A. E.



Smith's. Have you tried those fine drinks that A. E. Smith makes with cream? They are out of sight."

Various restaurant owners in Mahomet across the years include Justin Rayburn, Ernest Foster, C. B. Hoit, Frank Lindsey, Sam Cooke, Crowleys, Iva Lindsey, Blanche Pittman, Maude Lindsey, Mrs. Dan Smoot, Joe Cooke, Tom Maloney, and Barney White.

In connection with Phillips Service Station, at the junction of Routes 47 and 150, is Paul's Drive In, opened in May 1952.

### ROOMING HOUSES

In 1833, the County Commissioner fixed the following rates of prices to be charged: Keeping a man and horse for one night, including supper, bed and horse feed, 75c; single meal 18¾c; horse feed 12½c.

Fred Stearns says, "Cowans sold their property which was west of Holzer's store to Mr. and Mrs. John Waugh. Mr. Waugh died soon after, and Mrs. Waugh kept roomers and boarders for a long time. D. H. Hartley rented upstairs and went to school, graduated at Mahomet, then on to Bloomington Illinois to college and later became a Methodist minister. Dr. Wall and Dr. Tom Wilson were both boarders for a long time."

The Pointer house that was torn down (east of Jahr's store) used to be a hotel, operated by Mrs. Elihu Hayward. On the corner where Mrs. Florence Gilbert lives was a hotel operated by Mrs. Rebecca Herriott. The old hotel was operated by Mrs. Clara Chapman for many years.

Mrs. Agnes (Aunt "Ag") Herriott kept "runners" (traveling salesmen) for many years where George Campbell now lives. Mrs. Rose Wright for many years "boarded" the school teachers.

### SHELLING

Edd Campbell started in the shelling business about 1911. James Campbell took over the "Campbell Shelling" in 1921.

### MAHOMET SHIPPING ASSOCIATION

Mahomet Shipping Association was organized about 1918 with B. F. Rayburn as president, Frank W. Taylor as secretary-treasurer, and Gilbert Trinkle, as manager. Other members of the Board were John Rittenhouse and Frank Thomas.

### TAVERNS

Dr. Adams' Tavern stood on the north end of Lot No. One and was a two-story log building, built flush with the sidewalk. This building was later used as an ice house, more than 85 years ago.

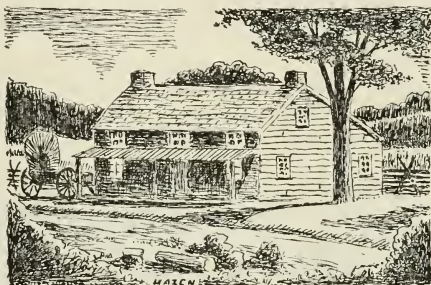
Joseph Lindsey in 1826 entered the land under a government certificate where Mahomet now stands. It is thought that Lindsey's homestead was on the east side of the Sangamon River and probably on the Old Bloomington Road, now U. S. 150. There is evidence of a dwelling having stood about 800 feet east of the Ernest Stout corner and on the south side of the road. It is believed this Lindsey homestead was transferred to Mathew Johnson.

Quoting from S. C. Abbott autobiography, July, 1847: "At LeRoy took stage for Urbana, two-horse spring wagon, carrying the mail, stopped at Middletown at Mathew Johnson's Tavern, east of town, laid over for next trip two days, got acquainted with the Taylor Bros. and their widowed mother." Probably this Johnson Tavern was built originally by Lindsey. It

was later used for the barn on the Fred Mohr place; it originally stood where the residence is now.

This tavern became a point of relay for the stage line. "Uncle Job" Miller drove the stage between Middletown and Urbana. The resident of the "Half-Way-House" had two yoke of oxen which he used to pull the stage out of mudholes along the line.

About one-half mile east of the Old Middletown Ford and upon the site of the present house on "Timber Edge" farm now occupied by J. C. Moore, stood the "Ohio" or "Nine Gal Tavern." According to Robert Wright, many years ago throughout western Champaign County there were many settlers from the State of Ohio. As to the "Nine Gal" title, it is said that at one time one of the proprietors had nine red-headed daughters. In the 1850's this tavern was owned and operated by Thomas Davidson, and the story was told by Mrs. Davidson that Abraham Lincoln stayed here many times.



**NINE GAL TAVERN - OLD MAHOMET**

(From a sketch by Fred Hazen)

About three-fourths of a mile east of the "Brick School" and on the old Bloomington Road, there was laid out in lots, a site for the Town of Bloomfield. It is said that the first survey for the Wabash Railroad was made along the road north and south from the Stover farm. The railroad, however, was built three and one-half miles west of this point, going through Mansfield. This was then known as the Robert Rea farm (now the Parrett farm). This farm was homesteaded by the Rea family who came from Kentucky in 1848. The Rea home, also called the Rea Tavern, stood upon the site of the present house, but many years ago this tavern was moved across the road to the south. Abraham Lincoln stayed here many times while riding the ~~Seventh~~ Judicial Circuit.

*Eighth*

#### **TELEPHONE SERVICE**

Dr. J. D. Culver had a telephone line as early as 1887 between his residence and office. The second private telephone line to be installed here was built by Forrest L. Tanner and connected the William Tanner residence with that of his lumber yard office, some 500 feet away. Then later Tanner built the Joseph A. Carson line which was a single wire between the Carson store and the home.

"Bill" Johnson tells that "Old Man" Geiger was mayor of Mahomet, perhaps in the 1880's, and refused to let the Bell Telephone Company go through the town; it had to go north and around the town. With the first

telephone lines, each person was sold a book of coupons when the telephone was installed and each coupon entitled the holder to make a telephone call.

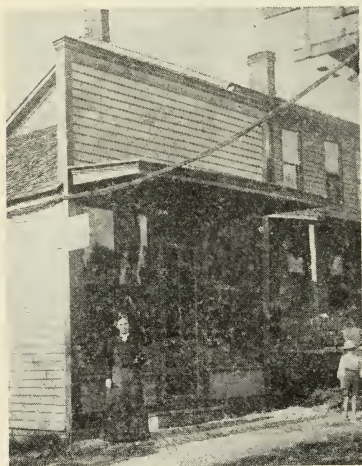
Elbert Morrison was informed by I. T. Bridges that just prior to 1901 and in a two-story frame building (site of old Carter building) two toll lines were located there, one from the west, and the Home Company from Champaign. We believe in 1900 the Bell Telephone Company (long distance) had their toll line in the A. E. Smith Meat Market and Cafe which stood about on the present site of the General Telephone Building.

Mr. Morrison was informed by I. T. Bridges that the first telephone was installed in H. J. Morehouse's office by Mr. Bridges. In 1915, the "central" office was moved to the present location, and Mr. Bridges sold the old building which had housed the telephone exchange for fourteen years. The first telephone operator was Zaye Williamson. Maude Herriott served as night operator for twenty-two years out of the twenty-seven and a half years that Mr. Bridges operated this Mahomet system.

1915 (SS). "The Bell Telephone Company now has its toll line cut in the Mahomet Telephone Company switchboard. This will make it quite convenient for the local people."

I. T. Bridges sold out to Illinois Commercial Telephone in 1927.

Pictured below is Mrs. Ombra Foster by the first telephone office (the building that did stand just east of the old Hotel). Also pictured below is Mrs. Foster (Ombra Lindsey at that time) at the switchboard in the first telephone exchange in Mahomet.



General Telephone Company of Illinois is a part of the General Telephone System which has sixteen operating companies, furnishing service in twenty-one states, to approximately two million stations. This Company was incorporated in 1928 and was then known as the Illinois Commercial Telephone Company.

This is the largest of the more than 350 independent telephone companies in Illinois and is the largest independent telephone company serving the United States. Operating in 66 of the 102 counties in Illinois, it is serving over 187,000 telephones in 651 communities through 235 exchanges.

It is anticipated that all telephones will be dial by 1960.

The present chief operator is Millie DeGroft who has been here since September 1953. Mrs. DeGroft has been a great help in getting out this book of history with her fine service in the many calls made to get the needed data. Another operator is Mrs. Harold Jones.

### **THEATRES**

The Pastime Theatre was located where the American Legion Building is today. Elmer Hawkins operated the Pastime Theatre around 1905. Elmer sold the Pastime to Forrest Tanner in 1912 and continued with the Hall. Forrest Tanner purchased the Holzer Building. 1912 (SS). "Ernie Adams who is traveling with the Elmer Hawkins Movie Picture Show is spending Sunday with his parents." 1916. "The New Pastime Theatre will open here Tuesday evening. F. L. Tanner is the proprietor."

May 1918 (SS). "Carpenters are working this week, building a stage in the Pastime Theatre. They will have the work completed in time for the high school play Friday evening, May 10. New curtains are being made and will be hung Friday morning."

Elmer Hawkins operated the theatre again around 1923-1924. Such pictures as Harold Lloyd in "The Freshman" and other silent movies equally as entertaining were shown, with piano accompaniments by Zuma Gilbert.

For many years the high school plays, class night programs, etc. were held here.

### **UNDERTAKERS**

The Undertaking, or now modernly known as Funeral Directing, in Mahomet has followed a secession for over 125 years. The first undertaker, "Father" John Robertson came with his family from Kentucky in 1830, and settled about one mile east of the Champaign County Courthouse, before Urbana was even thought of. The said John Robertson is credited with conducting the first religious service in Champaign County, which at that time was in Vermilion County, Illinois. (Vermilion County became Champaign County in the Fall of 1833.)

"Father" John came to Middletown in 1832, settling on his homestead about one mile west of Mahomet on the old state road—but not called a state road until four years later. Today this farm is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Claude Thorpe. John "Squire" Robertson (grandfather of Cleon Gilbert) was the undertaker prior to Joe Pittman. He gave up the undertaking business to be Justice of the Peace, a rather lucrative position at one time.

Where "Rondy" Sanders now lives, was the site of "Furniture" Joe Pittman's undertaking establishment. 1881 (SS). J. C. Pittman advertises "Will attend funerals at all times with a first-class hearse." "Furniture" Joseph Pittman took over the undertaking work and for fifty years conducted a furniture store, making many burial boxes as he was an excellent cabinet maker. Mr. Pittman died in 1897; then for about one year James W. Herriott (Barber Jim) took over for the Pittman Estate. Mr. Herriott's wife was a daughter of William Robertson.

In 1898, Mr. H. J. Morehouse bought the Undertaking business and building from the Pittman estate. Later Chester A. Morehouse became his father's assistant and remained in the business until he left in October 1917 for duty in the army. 1917 (SS). "C. A. Morehouse went to Mattoon where he assisted in the Schilling Ward, taking care of the dead caused by the tornado."

September 15, 1920, E. W. Morrison purchased the business and

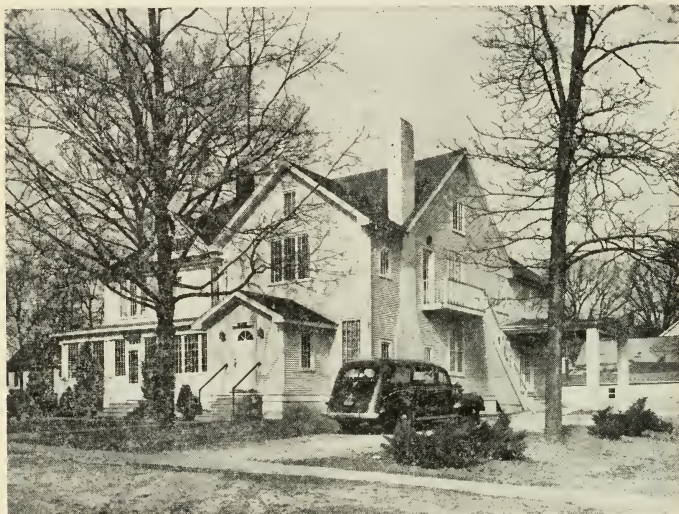


building from his father-in-law and it became known as the Morrison Funeral Service.

### **Blair Funeral Home**

The Blair Funeral Home, under Eli W. and James W. Blair, opened for business January 1, 1940. On August 15, 1946, the Morrison Funeral Service was sold to the Blair brothers with Mr. Morrison as Assistant Director. In August 1952, E. W. Blair moved to Newton, Illinois to take up farming and his brother continued with the business.

A branch office of the Blair Funeral Home was opened on Main Street in Fisher in 1947, and later moved to the Neal home on Highway 136.



**Blair Funeral Home in Mahomet**

### **VETERINARIANS**

"Across the street from the John Dickson home are Lots Nos. 2, 3, and 4, Block 2 (where Dr. Smith's office is now located). Dr. D. E. Sisk bought these lots with the purpose of erecting a veterinary hospital, but Mr. Dickson was so opposed to the idea that he bought the lots from Dr. Sisk for the sum of \$3500. Many years later these same lots were sold for \$400.

May 1923 (SS). "Dr. A. L. Blair, veterinary of Newton, Illinois, has leased the Wright property in the north part of town, and will move here the first of May."

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

**Campbell Industries**, established November 1947.

Bert Williams Watch Repair.

**Guy Warner's Concrete Products** established in January 1946.

**Richard Watts Limestone and Fertilizer**. "Dick" has been in this business since 1933.



Other places of business in Mahomet today are—Brown's Barber Shop, Lake's Barber Shop, Wells Brikcrete, Marathon Filling Station, Mobilgas Filling Station, Standard Filling Station, Shell Filling Station, Don's Potato Chip Factory, Wayne Armstrong's Insurance Office, Dawkins Electrical Shop, Ola Polson's Variety Store, Benton Mahin Contractor, and Don Sanders Landscaping.

Woodshop, belonging to Dave Pittman, was located across the street from Abbott's Hall, but we do not know the extent of his business.

## **RECREATIONAL ENTERPRISES**

### **Lake of the Woods**

One of the most scenic spots in Champaign County, lying near the course of the historic Sangamon River, was selected in 1948 for the establishment of the Lake of the Woods Forest Preserve. The first purchase of land (260 acres) was made in 1948, and there have since been several additions, through purchases or gifts, making a total of 331 acres.

The Lake of the Woods is one and a half miles northeast of Mahomet, a part of the old Gulick Homestead.

From 100 to 200 trees have been planted each year—white pines, maples, willows, ash, oak, and sycamore. The new plantings have enhanced the beauty of the old. The trees in the Howard Woods area are some of the finest specimens in Illinois. Thousands visit the preserve every season. Fishing, boating, golf (18-hole course), swimming, picnicking, hiking, and other forms of outdoor recreation are available. There is no entrance fee for use of the Lake of the Woods grounds and some of its facilities, but concessions from rental of boats, from the use of the bathhouse and swimming area, from golf fees and from donations has approximated \$65,000 a year. Cost of all the improvements in the Lake of the Woods area, including the land and the macadamized, widened county road leading to the property, from 1948 through 1954, inclusive, has been about \$650,000. The Commission President is H. I. Gelvin.

### **Champaign Sportsmen's Club**

Located across from the Lake of the Woods, but a private enterprise, is the Champaign Sportsmen's Club.

### **Urbana Sportsmen's Club**

A man-made lake is being built just about a half mile southwest of Mahomet which will be the Urbana Sportmen's Club.

Another private lake is being built two miles west of Mahomet on the Abbott land.

## General News Items Taken From Old Issues of Mahomet Sucker State

1907. It is interesting to note that "in 1907 the average automobile cost \$2,121 with top, windshield, and horn extra."
1911. Fred Barber reports that he has driven his Rambler car 13,221 miles, with the same tires on it and never a blowout. Then all at once he had the misfortune of having seven blowouts in one week...The Juniors entertained the Sophomores at the home of W. O. Dale. A three-course lunch was served. One of the main features of the evening's entertainment was a butterfly hunt, the butterflies being hidden in obscure places. A flashlight picture was taken of the two classes. Those present were Claude Purnell, Esta Rayburn, Gladys McNeill, Beatrice Foster, Mary Godwin, Bernice Downs, Lulu Dale, Laura Rowe, Bernice Jones, Lester Warner, Guy Williamson, Fred Kroner, Vern Rittenhouse, Roscoe Miller, John Downs, John Carson, Orval Black, and Ray Irle...While C. A. Morehouse and wife were in Peoria, Chester took a picture of Walter Brookins while making a flight. This is the first time that anyone from Mahomet has taken a picture of a flying machine...Charles Purnell is one of the many persons who has recently purchased land in Michigan.
1912. J. B. Busey of Urbana was in town Tuesday with two of the 1913 model Warren Detroit cars. They are completely equipped with all the latest conveniences. F. O. Jahr purchased one of them, and now is spending his extra time learning to drive it...Robert Davis has stone vaults which range in price from \$10 to \$25, according to size...Ernest Stout has purchased a new Indian motorcycle which he expects to use to deliver the mail...Ferne Hoit, Vira Bryan, Julia Carson, Stanley Spencer, Sam Stout, and Vance Hood will take the teachers' exam Saturday in Urbana...At the [April] election several of the oldest men in the country attended. Among them were J. Q. "Pappy" Thomas who was 83 years old. He has never worn glasses, and has never voted any other place; Jonas Lester has cast 57 votes; Thomas Dale has voted in this township 56 times and has missed but one vote...Baptized in river: Etta Barber, Carrie Stevens, and Merle Guinn were baptized in the Sangamon River at the Sand Bank near the Jonas Lester residence on Sunday, immediately following the morning service.
1913. Township Spelling Contest was held at the grade school last Saturday. The following made the highest grades: Lisle Lester, 99; Zaye Gulick, 92; and Lenora Bensley, 91...Otis Pfiester drove his National Roadster to F. O. Wright's Sunday, and while there the car stalled in the mud. In trying to get out a little damage was done to the car. On Monday William Murphy pulled it to the J. N. Black Garage, and an expert came from Champaign Tuesday who did the repairs.
1914. The filling of the ice house of A. H. Sperling was completed Thursday. The ice was of fine quality, and was about eight inches thick...Ernest Stout, Willis Black, Ray Irle, and Roscoe Smith made a 200-mile trip Sunday on their motorcycles. They visited Devil's Kitchen, Homer Park, Danville, and Covington, Indiana. They had but one blowout and two punctures on the entire trip...Wednesday

the deal was closed between Zaye Williamson and the village council whereby the village becomes the owner of the four lots formerly belonging to Miss Williamson. The village expects to build hitch racks around the entire purchase, and the inside will be used for a village park, which Miss Williamson reserved the right to name. . . . J. J. Hayward, being the Chairman of the County Road and Bridge Committee, has been called to Springfield to attend the letting of the contract for the first "hard road" in this county.

1915. After April 1, I will be in a position to furnish a limited number of white orphington settings at \$5.00 per setting. J. W. Herriott. . . . Up-to-date Poultry House out on Sunny Slope Poultry Farm—Chester Morehouse. . . . W. B. Behrens and family left Tuesday for Charleston where they will make their home. . . . On the Harris farm one engine is pulling two binders cutting oats while another engine is pulling three binders. This is being done because the extreme heat is too much for the horses. This method requires fourteen men to shock the oats. They have 700 acres of oats which it is believed will make over fifty bushels to the acre. . . . George Carter has completed the filling of his ice house. Part of the ice was fourteen inches thick . . . . We will have a car of Gold Medal Flour and feed on track here Friday and Saturday. The flour will be \$5.90 per barrel, at the car. Fred Snell.
1917. During the past few days Mahomet has been solicited as to the number that would use electricity if brought here from Bondville or Champaign. . . . Ice taken from the river was eighteen inches thick . . . . M. E. Smith secured permission to set trees in the village park. . . . A car load of Fords arrived Tuesday, and were immediately taken by the following: Joe Sylvester, John Phillippe, W. W. Vance, Lonnie Jones, and Matt Busey. . . . Charles Purnell is driving a new Maxwell car. . . . On account of the increased price of feed we are forced to raise the price of milk to 10c per quart and 5c per pint—Sloan's Dairy. . . . Mahomet must raise \$550 for the Red Cross War Fund. . . . W. O. Dale purchased a new Reo automobile. . . . Red Cross War Notes: Orval Black, Battleship, Texas, wishes to express his gratitude to the Red Cross. Mrs. Pearman, Mrs. Black, Mrs. Wilkins, Mrs. Clarence Herriott, and Miss Warbritton have all heard from sweaters sent. Irene Ford has heard from three soldiers.
1918. The electric light petitions bore about 200 signatures of residents who favor lighting the village. . . . The sorghum mill located near the river bridge on the Fred Barber land in charge of Mr. Barber and Mr. Douglas Purnell is attracting a great deal of attention.
1919. Coffee one pound 25c.
1920. On Saturday night, eighty-nine automobiles were counted, parked on Main Street. . . . The first American radio broadcasting was transmitted from Station KDKA at Pittsburgh; it consisted of election returns.
1922. Ralph Foster is installing a wireless receiving station.
1924. Charles Purnell is making rather extensive repairs on his farm residence east of town which he recently purchased and where he will move as soon as the work is completed.

1928. Frank Phillippe made a trip to town Monday evening in his Ford motor car. It was the first car seen here on the streets for some time, owing to the muddy roads.
1929. At the village board meeting Monday night the calaboose was sold to Walter Wright for \$10.
1932. At the village board meeting a representative of the I. P. L. was expected to be present to talk over the street lighting proposition. At present the rate is \$94 a month for the fifty-four street lights, and the Board feels they need a lower rate.
1933. The Merry Mer-Maid Club enjoyed a very successful camping trip at the Purnell cabin north of Mahomet on the Sangamon River. Those present were Inez Bagley of Champaign, Pauline Herriott, Florence Wigton, Marie Hickie, Alpha Hicks, Mary Phillippe, Louise and Isabelle Purnell, and Lucille Moore.
1935. Extra good storm buggy to trade for work horse.—John Anderson.
1937. Charles Purnell, while milking on Tuesday morning, thought of the idea of Mahomet's giving an entertainment and turning the entire proceeds over to the Red Cross for flood sufferers. He came to town and met with such fine cooperation that a program was immediately worked up. This program will be given at the high school Wednesday at 7:30. Admission of 15c and 25c will be charged. The program will be as follows: music, High School Band; male quartet, Gerald Miller, Ernest Smith, Charles Purnell, and Clair Kokensparger; reading, Margaret Wicoff; cornet solo, Paul Stout; vocal duet, Shively sisters; play, public speaking class of the high school; vocal duet, Frances Dees and Gerald Miller; music, Grade School Chorus; instrumental duet, Doris Moore and Alma Primmer; cello solo, Lorene Jeffers; skit, Virginia Smoot and Philip Buker; mixed quartet, Lorene Jeffers, Grace Vandervoort, W. C. Coe, Norman McClure; music, High School Band. . . . Frank W. Taylor was elected supervisor.
1938. C. W. Pugh has received a letter from George P. "Chicken" Miller, 92 years old February 13, about the wolf drive forty years ago. "I hope you will have better success with your fox chase than we did with our wolf drive back in 1897 or 1898. I dislike to place the blame on the Newcomb Township boys for our failure to capture the five wolves that were seen by Andy Phillippe that morning, but instead of their going south to meet the Mahomet boys, they went east from the bridge, allowing the wolves to escape. Among those present were Oscar Dale, Frank Thomas, Jerry and Will Johnston, Joe Rittenhouse, Oscar and Gene Smith, Andy Phillippe, and perchance some I do not recall." . . . Mahomet residents were pleased and surprised that the street lights were turned on. The first system was installed twenty years ago. . . . Lake Mahomet was asked for by the Planning Commission.
1939. The number of local residents desiring to use city water now appears to be one hundred. . . . Three pounds of coffee for 39c; ten pounds of sugar 45c. . . . Mahomet Waterworks was installed. . . . All motorists applying for license will be obliged to take driving tests.
1946. Morrison Hobby and Antique Show, sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Morrison was held Friday evening in the high school. (Mr. and Mrs. Morrison held these hobby shows in January from 1943 to 1949.)

The following items are taken from a copy of the Champaign County News Gazette, March 10, 1886, the original copy of which is in the possession of Mrs. Mae Rayburn of Ithaca, Michigan. The subscriber was M. B. Gleason, and the subscription rate was \$1.50 a year, paid in advance. The paper was one sheet, folded in four parts.

A large party of relatives and friends gathered at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rayburn at Mahomet, Thursday evening, to witness the marriage of their daughter, Eda Belle Rayburn to Louis Clapper of Mahomet....Charles Lindsey is prospecting in Kansas....J. W. Egbert and family shipped for Fort Scott, Kansas, on Friday....J. W. Tanner is building a dwelling house for Miss Scott of Champaign....Mrs. Stout, aged 87 years, died at the home of her son-in-law, Jerry Warner....Mrs. H. Smith has purchased of James Rowe the dwelling house just north of the Presbyterian Church; consideration \$550 cash....Supervisor G. F. Geiger went to Champaign Monday and paid \$4,000 on the \$5,000 township bond due July 1, 1886, thus saving to the township \$75 interest....J. W. Parks, Samuel Ramey, Phillip Cherry, Mrs. James Watson and Mrs. Wiley Davis are seriously sick....Married, on Thursday evening, by Rev. Wm. Murphy, at the M. E. Parsonage, Mr. Stephen Raines and Miss Lizzie Morse.

### **Times Have Changed**

Among the old receipts of Mrs. Mary B. Caldwell was found one from the Burnham Hospital dated 1910 which read: room and board March 15-23, \$11.50; medicine, 25c; operating room \$3.00; surgical dressings, 25c. Total \$15.

Mrs. Robert Clapper, Sr., has in her possession a receipt, given to her great-grandmother Banes by Dr. J. D. Gardner, for 66½ bushels of oats at 20c a bushel (\$13.30), October 24, 1872.

### **Newcomb Township**

Newcomb Township was surveyed in 1823 and the township was named after Ethan Newcom who settled near Newcomb Ford in 1837. The "b" was later added to his name. The first settler in Newcomb township was James S. Mitchell who settled on Sec. 22, known later as Pancake Point. The second settler, Arnspiker, only stayed a short time and moved on in 1837. The third settler was William Pancake who came from Ohio in 1837 and lived first in a log cabin across the road west from Shiloh Church on the farm now known as the Downs farm. It is from this man that we get the name Pancake Point for the beautiful knoll where the Shiloh church and parsonage now stand. The first school in Newcomb Township was in Jesse Pancake's old log cabin. The first schoolhouse was built in 1852 on the same section as the one where the Hannah school later stood. In 1875 a Post Office was established in the home of E. Compton on the hill just south of the Shiloh Church. Mail was brought out from Mahomet twice a week, on Tuesday and Saturday. Within Newcomb Township we find it had several well-defined fords across the Sangamon River—The Newcomb (at or near the bridge, State Highway No. 119), the Thrasher (on township line south of Fisher), the Shaffer (about one mile below the Thrasher Ford), The Blacker (about half a mile above the Hazen Bridge).



## MEMORIAL ORGAN

The goal was reached and the new Baldwin Electronic Organ was installed for the centennial. Most of the money was given as gifts in memory of the following:

SADIE CARTER  
DORA MILLER  
EVA ARMSTRONG  
LEN RAYBURN FAMILY  
MATT HERRIOTT  
MR. AND MRS. JOHN JACOBS  
RICHARD PARKER  
KEITH CLAPPER FAMILY  
DR. R. H. SMITH FAMILY  
J. M. DOWELL FAMILY  
PATRICIA LEACH'S FATHER  
LYLE GARST  
FRANK LINDSEY  
THE PUGH FAMILY  
FRED PRIMMER FAMILY  
FRANK DAVIS FAMILY  
ERNEST MOON FAMILY  
MERLE CLAPPER  
CHARLES PURNELL FAMILY  
REV. H. RAY FUNK  
SHERRY HAMMETT'S FATHER  
MRS. K. S. MANUEL  
JAMES WILSON FAMILY  
MR. AND MRS. J. M. DICKSON  
FRANK H. JAHR

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(Names listed as of April 25, 1955)

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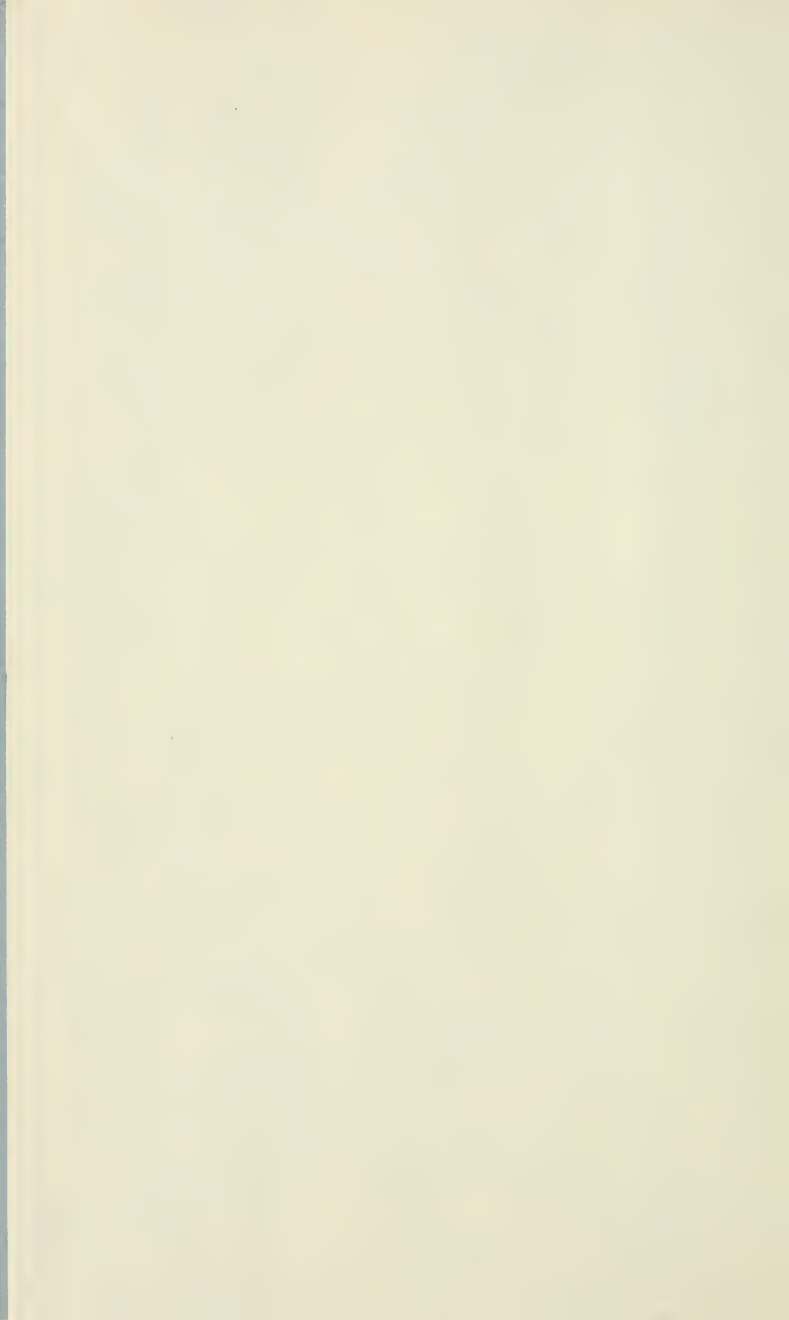
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